S. D. Peech

children's children

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children's children

By S. D. PEECH

Uncomprehendingly the world looks at Germany which produced the Ninth Symphony as well as the Nazi doctrine, philosophers and humanitarians as well as extermination camps and slave labor gangs. What peculiar historical accidents have made the Germans so famous and so infamous?

In "children's children" *S. D. Peech* offers an explanation by telling the story of an average German family from the year 1813 when young Sebastian Dallmann helps decide the battle against Napoleon, to the day in 1931 when his great-grandchildren Jasper and Jarni face each other as deadly enemies across political barricades. Between these two dates passes the cavalcade of a people that decided on a democratic revolution in 1848 but thwarted it by romantic individualism, that drove brilliant educators like Kuno Dallmann to insanity by militaristic persecution; permitted a great protestant tradition to degenerate into asocial mysticism as

continued on back flap

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CHILDREN'S CHILDREN

BY

S. D. PEECH

Hilla Rebay
Collection

NEW YORK

H. BITTNER AND COMPANY

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— *and peace itself is war in masquerade* —

DRYDEN, *Absalom*

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I. The Great-Grandfathers

The crude straw pillow under the wounded man's head was soaked. The smell of drying blood, clotting quickly in the warm air, mixed with the odors of stable and horses. Beside the bed sat a boy waving his hand to chase away the big black gadflies that came in ever larger swarms to suck on the wound. But there were too many for one hand to deal with, and Sebastian gave up. A horse had kicked his father in the head, leaving a deep gash on the right temple. It would have been a fatal injury even if a surgeon had been there to attend to it, but there was no doctor at the bedside of Johannes Dallmann. He was only a stable man, and stable men were liable to be kicked by a horse one day, especially when they grew old.

Sebastian watched the yellow face with impatience, turning his cap nervously between his fingers. He knew his father was dying and he wished it were all over. The quiet was depressing. Only the horses were audible from below pawing the ground and clanking their chains. The bloody smell, the imminence of death, frightened the boy. He looked around the little room to get away from the face on the bed, but there was nothing to hold his attention. A rickety table carried the scraps of a meal, a stable lantern, and a Bible. On hooks around the unfinished board walls hung the accessories of a horseman, and on a single shelf stood bottles and boxes with horse remedies. A faded curtain closed off a corner at the foot of the bed. There, Sebastian knew, hung the one good suit his father possessed: a braided velvet coat, short black silk breeches, buckled shoes, and a three-cornered hat. The whole outfit was ridiculously old-fashioned, and Sebastian had squirmed with embarrassment when he had to accompany his father wearing it.

The injured man moved restlessly, blood trickling into his mouth. The boy took a rag, soaked it in water, and tried to clean the twisted face. Without opening his eyes the old man lifted a feeble hand in search for his son, but Sebastian withdrew with unconcealed repulsion. His father had always been a stranger to him, a burden to be endured on Sundays and holidays. Distorted by suffering and death he was a haunting phantom whose icy fingers would get hold of him if he did not run away. The stool beside the bed tumbled. Get away from death — there's the knob, shiny with age — get away — but the door opened before the boy's hand could grasp the knob and a very old man came into the attic-room. His skeletal frame was draped in the multi-colored silks and velvets of a rococo cavalier.

"His Royal Highness, the Prince of Olmsfeld," announced a footman who had squeezed himself past the old man and was rapping the dusty floor three times with the end of a lance carrying an embroidered pennant.

Like a horse obeying a familiar signal, the dying man opened his eyes and tried to sit up.

"Your Highness?" The faint trace of a smile appeared on the blood-stained face. "You have come yourself, Your Highness?"

"I heard you had a little accident," said His Highness in a forcedly jovial manner. "I missed you when I found you weren't holding my horse this morning for the first time in forty years. How do you feel?"

He pulled a scented handkerchief from his pocket and pressed it against his mouth to hide his revulsion. Johannes Dallmann's lips moved in a desperate attempt to answer his master's question. But there was only a feeble sound; the clotted blood choked his throat. The prince watched the pitiful struggle through a lorgnette he held in a hand shaking with the fear of death. Helplessly he turned and saw Sebastian who was watching the scene with eager eyes.

"Who are you?"

"His son, Your Highness."

"His son? How old?"

"Thirteen, Your Highness."

The prince turned to the bed.

"I didn't even know you had children, you old sinner." He shook his forefinger jokingly at the dying man while sweat drew oily streaks over his powdered face. "He's a fine strong lad."

For the last time Johannes Dallmann pulled himself out of unconsciousness. With a gigantic effort he lifted his battered head.

"Your Highness," he whispered. "If Your Highness would graciously consent to take the boy into Your Highness' service."

"Of course, Johannes." The prince was visibly relieved that there was something he could grant his old servant. "I shall be glad to consider him as a footman. Let him report to the marshal as soon as he leaves school."

He waved his lace handkerchief toward the bed and walked hurriedly out of the room, leaving behind a faint scent of lavender.

When Sebastian looked back to the bed he saw that his father was dead. Johannes Dallmann's face bore a grateful smile. He had died with the vision of his son in gold-braided livery, nourished and protected by the benevolence of the Prince who with infallible wisdom had assigned to him only horse brush and manure fork.

Olmsfeld, capital of one of the three hundred and fifty independent principalities that formed the crazy quilt of the Holy German Reich, had a remarkable schoolmaster. Taddaeus Ibener was a foreigner, a native of the Rhine Provinces, stranded in the mountain town after a leg injury had forced him to quit service in Napoleon's triumphant army. His convictions were based on French Enlightenment, and he handed on to his pupils the ideas of Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau without having any illusion about their influence upon children who were bound to become farmers, artisans, and petty court officials. But he believed in the work he had done on Sebastian Dallmann's mind.

"So what did you answer the prince?" He interrupted the boy's description of the scene at his father's death-bed.

"Nothing. Father was still alive. I couldn't hurt his feelings by telling the old scarecrow I'd never be a lackey."

Ibener smiled, his pensive face full of pride.

"No lackey, eh? But what are you going to do when school is over? I told you I can get you a scholarship at the high school in Halle."

"I don't want to. I can't sit still any longer. Don't you see? The world is all in uproar and revolution. I want to find out what's going on. I want to be there when it happens."

"When what happens?"

"I don't know exactly." The boy sounded uncertain now. "I just feel restless. This fight between old and new, between Napoleon and the princes, is going to be decided soon. I — I wish I could join the army."

"The army? Which one and why?"

"Our army, of course, fighting with Napoleon."

"You couldn't do that."

"Why not?"

"You can't throw your life away for a cause that isn't yours."

"But it is ours. You taught me yourself that the Great Revolution has liberated the common people. Napoleon is a common man, he's our natural leader."

"He was a long time ago. It's no longer true." In Ibener's voice was the bitterness of lost faith. "He sold out when he made himself an emperor. He called back the aristocrats, set up a military dictatorship protected by a corrupt police, and drenched Europe in blood to conquer people he knew he could never rule."

"But you wouldn't want me to fight with the princes?"

"Of course not."

"I don't understand." Sebastian was impatient. "You don't want the monarchs to win and you are against Napoleon. On which side shall I fight?"

"You shouldn't fight at all. The war that's now going on is not our battle — not yet. One day the pressure from above, from the Metternichs and the Napoleons will become strong enough to unite the common people for action. Then, and only then, I want you to fight, helping to finish the Great Revolution."

Sebastian looked sullen and disappointed.

"I won't wait till I'm old and feeble. I want to fight now."

"They wouldn't even take you. You are much too young."

"That's what you think." Sebastian had to be rude to overcome the soundness of Ibener's argument. "I'm no longer a baby who can't decide his own fate."

"You don't even know what you're fighting for. You're just fighting for fight's sake, you young fool."

Ibener was shouting in a desperate attempt to save the boy he loved. But Sebastian was the child of belligerent times. Twenty years of uninterrupted hostilities had made war a natural way of living.

"I'm going, and you can't stop me." He tore his cap from the hook. "I'm going to fight for Napoleon no matter what you think. It takes a young man to understand what he is fighting for."

Sebastian was proud, wilful, and of superior intelligence. A home and the influence of a mother might have forced him into a conventional mold, but Sebastian had no mother. He had been reared in the belief that she had been a peasant girl who had died in childbed, but among his father's belongings were documents proving that she had been the maid of a French general's wife who had spent a year at Olmsfeld castle. In spite of vows to marry the father of her child she had fallen so homesick for her native Paris that two weeks after Sebastian's birth she had vanished without so much as a good-bye to her suitor.

By the middle of 1813 the political camps had drawn their final lines, and feverish preparations for a decisive fight between France and the hereditary sovereigns of Europe stirred the continent. The Prince of Olmsfeld had pledged allegiance to the ruler of Saxony, who in 1803 had been elevated to the rank of king by Napoleon. Bound by secret treaty, his subjects had to fight with the French against the Holy Alliance of England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia.

Sebastian Dallmann was not old enough to carry arms, but he was accepted as a drummer boy and got a gay uniform and a red and white drum. He was much too proud to pay attention to the baton of the band-master as he beat the drum in the farewell parade of the Olmsfeld Lancers. He scorned keeping time. When the regiment finally passed the Prince marching out of the gate he lifted his hand in salute to his temple — an honor strictly reserved for officers. Nothing happened to him then, but a day before the decisive combat the stern discipline of war caught up with him. For reasons of insubordination he was dismissed from the army. He would however not have been Sebastian Dallmann, had he given up his dream of being a hero. He participated in the final stand a United Europe made against aggression by carrying ammunition to the cannons and supplying the wounded with water and linen dressings he had stolen from the tent of the provision officer.

After twenty-four hours of fighting, half blinded by powder-dust and exhaustion, he came upon the marshal of Olmsfeld who was standing with other officers on a bluff overlooking the battlefield. Sebastian wanted to turn. He knew that after his discharge he was not allowed on the front, but he couldn't get away. The marshal had caught him by the scruff of his neck.

"Wait. Isn't that the drummer boy?" Sebastian turned white.

"Where's your drum?"

"I — they — nobody wanted to ke-e-e-p it, sir, after — after the new drummer boy was killed. I — I didn't mean to — to take it away, sir. Honestly — " The officer shook him impatiently.

"Shut up. We have no time to lose. Get your drum. Hurry."

He spun the boy around sending him flying down the slope with a violent kick. Sebastian climbed the maple tree where he had hidden the drum. He slung it over his shoulder and ran back to the marshal who now stood in a rain of advancing gun fire.

"See that group of trees over there?" he yelled into Sebastian's ears. "That's where you head for. Here, keep that in your belt. And drum, boy, drum like the devil. Don't stop till you're dead or at the trees."

He pushed a stick with a white flag, crudely fashioned from a man's shirt, inside the back of the boy's coat.

"But sir," screamed the boy against the din of the cannonade and the throbbing of his own heart. "It's the enemy over there." The marshal pointed a viciously elegant dagger at Sebastian's ribs.

"March, you idiot, if you don't want your belly sliced."

That is how Sebastian Dallmann led two Saxon regiments over to the United Armies in the middle of the Battle of Nations, and how he helped — a victim of circumstance — to defeat Napoleon. He never felt pride about the part he had played. Two days of carnage had wiped out his enthusiasm for heroes and wars. He wanted nothing but to live; and his survival filled him with such a passion for life that henceforth he met any impediment of this feeling with scorn and hostility. As the years passed and the experience of battle sank into his consciousness the uncounted lives he had lost and regained on the blood-drenched field made him the deeply human man his teacher Ibener had wanted him to become.

He was the first soldier of the battered Olmsfeld regiment to reach his home town. The old prince, in gratitude for the first news of the big victory and his narrow escape from being a traitor to the cause of German liberation, presented him with a certificate to handle the mail until the postmaster should return. But the postmaster never came back. At the age of eighteen Sebastian got the post concession and at twenty-one he owned sixteen horses, six new post chaises, and the attention of all unmarried girls in town.

He was slim, of average height, and indestructible health. He could drink with his passengers through the night and start at dawn with a clear head. Innumerable love affairs in the towns of his post route were credited to him but he was clever enough to avoid scandals. His fellow citizens objected to his free life, his lack of reverence toward the princely family, and his complete indifference in church matters. But his success and his versatility kept them at bay. He was not only an excellent postmaster, he was the best bowler in the princedom and the town could not afford to miss him at the weekly competition.

There was only one man with whom eternal hostility seemed inevitable. That was Cranborn, Ibener's unworthy successor as schoolmaster of Olmsfeld. He was a sombre, orthodox fellow with a poisonous hatred against those free of the many fetters he considered essential for a respectable life. Under his breath he called Sebastian a bastard and an atheist, and Sebastian paid him back with little ditties he hummed while bowling.

Hit'im on the head — crack'im on the bean;
A teacher like me you've never seen.
I love nature for growing the birch;
I love the township for building a church.
I love you sinners to trap you and flick you;
I love you children to catch you and lick you.

Cranborn's only child was a pale, gaunt-looking girl with red-rimmed eyes whose light seemed extinguished by too many tears. She was anything but a desirable wife for the young postmaster, but the thrill of challenging Cranborn's sinister tyranny and perhaps compassion for her dull and joyless life led Sebastian into a flirtation. One narcotic summer night, while he was driving her home, his inexhaustible gusto for love made him seduce her. Susanne's deadly shame, the fury of her accusations, sobered him down and with a feeling of great relief he accepted her vow that she would never see him again.

He had nearly forgotten her when teacher Cranborn came to his house, accompanied by minister and mayor, to demand with an avalanche of insinuations a marriage to save his daughter's name from defamation. To the bewilderment of the enraged dignitaries Sebastian was instantly ready to comply. He did not dread a scandal, he did not even feel a moral obligation toward a girl who had shown so little appreciation of him, but he had fallen in love with the idea of having children of his own. With the outrageous self-confidence that marked his character he decided to add another success to his many successes and make Susanne happy.

Only in his later years and only after a bottle of wine would he admit that it had been a complete failure. After many attempts to awaken Susanne's heart he gave up and left his son to her and Cranborn. But the misery of his home did not prevent him from enjoying life as much as ever. The world around him was obliged to make good a thousand times for his disappointments. He started to breed horses and was successful enough to sell them to every racing stable in the country. He worked untiringly to improve the handling of the mail and he became a wealthy man. But he was much more devoted to the romanticism of his profession than to money. Susanne's hatred, Cranborn's malice robbing him of his son's affection, the whispered censure of the townspeople, never touched his heart. But that no one around him understood the richness and glory of a postillion's life made him a lonely man. He wanted to share the beauty of a fresh morning, the calmness of a snowbound winter evening, the full-moon nights of midsummer. There was no one, only his horses. He did not love them with the humble devotion his father had felt. To his enlightened mind they never lost the stable smell of dumb creatures. But when his heart overflowed from all the miracles around him, he made little verses for them as a mother approaches her child's heart through a rhyme.

"We drive along through rain and sun
You always two — I always one.
I beg of tree, wind, grass, and stone
To let me know I am no more alone."

He died without having entered a church on his own accord, but it was holy service for him to stop in the glades outside the town, taking off his lacquered top hat, and to sing Mathias Claudius' gentle song:

The moon in silver splendor
The starlight golden tender
Are lighting up the sky.
The woods are black with stillness
And from the meadows' chillness
Drift white mysterious veils of night.

Here he was happy, an invincible soul united with the greatness of creation.

The postmaster was forty-seven years old when his weekly tour over the Ore Mountains to the Bohemian town of Nerosov took an unexpected turn. For twenty years his first stop had been at the smithy to have the horseshoes inspected, but this time the forge was empty. The fire smouldered unattended on the enormous hearth. No master, no helpers. From the upper story came the deafening noise of many voices. There Sebastian found Jan Kretzschmar the smith, his ten children, his ailing wife, and a lot of drunken men. A grey canvas bag on the table held fifty thousand Talers. The smith of Nerosov had won the sweepstakes.

Among the penurious highland peasants and woodcutters he was an odd figure, a goblin of the mountains, living awkwardly and unhappily in the world of men. He was well over six feet tall and of terrific strength, but his mind was that of a child, mischievous and romantic. A passion for tall tales of early Slavic heroes was his escape from church doctrine and civilization, against which he felt the deep suspicion of a natural pagan. His nostalgia for the gloriously untamed past went into fine copper work which he did in addition to making pots, pans, and horseshoes. There were candle holders, goblets, necklaces, and bracelets, embellished with peculiar ornaments, copied from ancient signs that were pressed with straw ropes into the clay walls of Slavic houses, or carved into beams of gables and roofs. But Jan Kretzschmar had no one to appreciate his art because devout Catholics in Bohemia hated the "unholy stuff" as much as did the puritan Lutherans on the Saxon side of the Ore Mountains. It was this loneliness, this disappointment in a world of shallowness and hypocrisy that had made the wealthy postmaster and the poor smith become friends.

Before night came Jan had persuaded Sebastian to stay with him, and next morning a procession of five stage coaches left the excitedly watching town of Nerosov, headed for Olmsfeld. The post chaise was decked with flowers. Musicians in gaudy costumes sat on the roof, and in the carriage snored Jan Kretzschmar, the winner, the bag of gold clutched in his enormous fists. He had insisted that his triumphant entry into a town which so far had shown only contempt for the "godless Slovaks" be witnessed by his many new friends and all his children. They were led by his oldest daughter Babette, who frowned at the frequent stops in roadhouses and inns and defended her brothers and sisters like a lioness whenever someone dared to touch them. As the parade entered Olmsfeld, Sebastian Dallmann was the only one of the men who could stand squarely on his legs.

The innkeeper would have gladly opened his house and wine cellar to the well-paying guests had he not been afraid of losing the patronage of the respectable citizens if he sheltered the wild company. There was no other place for Jan and his friends to settle down than the market square. Before dusk the greatest jamboree this quiet town had ever seen was under way. Beer barrels and wine kegs were emptied, and what the innkeeper did not dare to sell was provided by farmers who had no scruples in accepting Louis d'ors and Maria Theresia Talers.

A travelling circus had been tipped off to this golden opportunity. Clowns and dancers, screeching monkeys, trained bears, and bragging acrobats entertained anyone who was willing to pay. Sebastian would have been shocked had he known that Jan Kretzschmar had bet his still heavy money bag against the strength of the circus wrestler who had just thrown a full-grown bull. But Sebastian paid no attention to the drunken men. He had discovered that one of the dancers could sing a little French song.

Buvons, ami, à pleine tasse
L'age insensiblement se passe
Et nous mène à nos derniers jours.
L'on a beau faire des prières
Les ans non plus que les rivières
Jamais ne rebroussant leurs cours.
Je t'aime tant
Je t'aime tant
Je ne puis
Assez te le dire
Et je le répète pourtant
A chaque fois que je respire
Lala lala lala lala
A chaque fois que je respire.

Sebastian's head rested in her lap. He inhaled the delicate scent of her young body, and looking upward with veiled eyes he saw her tender white throat and a jungle of black curls spread out fantastically against the blue night sky. She ceased singing and bent down to kiss his lips.

"Vous êtes Français?"

"Oui, chérie."

Sebastian smiled dreamily. The sweet face above became his mother's face — young, coquettish, exotic — and he knew that life had paid its last debt.

The frantic cheers of the crowd pierced his trance. The wrestler who had boasted that he could hold two men on his outstretched arms was lying on his back, and with a face blue from exertion the smith was showering coins over the moaning man.

"Let's go home." Sebastian grabbed the purse from Jan's hand. "We've had enough. We're all sleepy."

But Jan pushed him away with one shove of his enormous fist.

"You go home if you feel like it, I won't. I'm the winner and nobody can tell me anything. I have friends now, many friends, fine friends. And I'm rich. I can eat and drink as much as the Prince of Olmsfeld himself. I — go home to that filthy smithy? Oh no, not me, not Jan, the winner."

With the first dim light of dawn even the most persistent drinkers grew tired. They lay on the cobblestones between overturned tables and empty barrels, and snored. The circus clown had totaled up his gains, the wrestler had fallen asleep on the very spot where Jan had brought him down, and the young dancers had vanished. When Sebastian awoke from a short nap he found in his hand a pale green ribbon, and he decided to go home.

The big oak door of the posthouse was locked. He rang the bell, but someone had muffled it. He knocked, shouted, threw his weight against the boards. A long echo resounded from the stoneyard but no one came to open for the master. Jan Kretzschmar had slid to the ground, his head resting against a corner stone. In exhaustion Sebastian stopped. He looked up to the dark, tightly closed windows of his house, and suddenly he saw a face, pale, unmoved, cold. It was Susanne's face. Speechless he stared at her and it dawned on him that for today he had lost the battle. He packed the unconscious Jan into one of the carriages and started toward the mountains, foggy with drink, fatigue, and fury.

Perhaps he wanted to take a short cut, or he lost his way, or fell asleep driving. When early next morning the bodies of Jan Kretzschmar and Sebastian Dallmann were discovered in the river it was clear that they had tried to cross the stream not on the old stone bridge that had served the post carriages for a hundred years, but farther up where a narrow iron bridge without railings had been built only a week before. The bridge that sealed the death of the postmaster and the coppersmith was the new railway viaduct.

The other two great-grandfathers of the Dallmann family did not die together. Jodokus von Neel still lies under marble and ivy in the mausoleum of Castle Seusslitz, while the potter's field where Ephraim Posener found his last resting place has long since been excavated for the subway of Berlin.

They saw each other only once, on the eve of their children's wedding-day in Meran, a resort town for the cure of tuberculosis in South Tyrol. The young couple had met during one of Justus von Neel's long stays in the south, and they had fallen in love, heedless of the profound antipathy their fathers were bound to feel. Ephraim Posener, the penniless doctor of the poor, and Jodokus von Neel, the fabulously rich industrialist, had managed not to talk to each other during an uncomfortable dinner, but when night fell they met by chance on the Passeier Alp. Both had been driven by restlessness and sorrow from the hotel, and both watched, unaware of each other, the magnificent sunset behind the Dolomite Mountains. When the sky turned grey Jodokus von Neel sat down on a bench and buried his head in his hands with such violence that his silk hat slipped. Ephraim Posener had been standing on the other side of the platform. The luxurious hat rolling on the ground aroused his attention. He stooped and picked it up.

"Your property, sir," he said with irony.

He felt no pity when he looked into the tormented face of the man who was to become the father-in-law of his daughter. He saw only the cold eyes, the inhumanly thin lips, and the bony fingers folded in a costumary gesture of prayer over the golden knob of the cane. Lifting the brim of his worn black felt he placed his heavy body beside the patrician.

"It is late and cool," Jodokus von Neel said, glaring. "I have to go."

"Wait, please, Mr. von Neel." The doctor touched the other man's sleeve. "I want to talk to you."

The Royal Commercial Counselor, knight of many titles and orders, President of the Christian Brotherhood, made a tortured face.

"I can't think of anything we have to say to each other, Dr. Posener."

"I know you can't. For you everything is settled. The deal has been signed, and my daughter has been bought."

Jodokus von Neel turned aggressively. "What do you mean by 'deal?' You talk as if it were you who had to deplore this unfortunate union."

Ephraim Posener looked silently at von Neel, who felt uncomfortable under the gaze of these piercing eyes that were in disquieting contrast to the childlike roundness of the face.

"I mean — I want to say, I did not intend to offend you," he corrected himself hastily. "But you must admit that there are certain differences in standing and wealth that should not be disregarded in a civilized society."

"Right, Mr. von Neel, very right indeed." There was acid sarcasm in Ephraim Posener's voice. "Your class and mine should never mix. That's what I wanted to tell you." He bent his head closer to the other man to give his words more intensity. "This marriage will not take place, sir. It can't take place, do you understand me? Clara is only eighteen." His voice rose in defiance. "I will not allow her to be sacrificed for a couple of happy years for Mr. Justus von Neel. You go and tell that to your son."

He started to lift his heavy body from the seat, but this time it was the Royal Commercial Counselor who laid his hand beseechingly on the doctor's sleeve.

"Stay, please. You misunderstood me. No matter how deeply we regret this unfortunate union, there is nothing we can do about it. It is God's will."

Posener fell back heavily, his face twisted in scorn.

"God's will, you said? Did I hear you say God's will? Your son has tuberculosis in its last stage, that's what matters and nothing else. He is a hopeless case and you know it. Nothing can save him from an early death. You had to give your consent to this marriage or he would be dead already. That is why Clara Posener, the daughter of the poor Jewish doctor, had to be accepted by Jodokus von Neel, master over thousands of weavers, over millions of gold, and over uncounted pious souls in the Christian Brotherhoods."

"That's a lie!" Jodokus von Neel did not shout. He spoke in a low, strained voice. "You are a doctor. You must have noticed that Justus is better. Every day, every hour, it seems, he improves. He himself has told me so and his doctors have confirmed it. He will be cured, I know it. It is God's will. He does not abandon His faithful servant, and He does not punish those who search for His eternal truth."

"Eternal truth," wheezed the doctor, fighting helplessly against so much ambiguity. "What is eternal truth out of your mouth!" And then with a sudden thrust against fate, he shouted: "No, it can't be done. It is criminal to let her run into all that misery. She will not marry to-morrow. She will not — not with my consent!"

Jodokus von Neel watched the doctor's agony with narrowed eyes. Trained in fifty years of bargaining he weighed his chances to save his son's life.

"Doctor Posener." He tried a new conciliatory note. "Believe me, you are not seeing the situation right. Thanks to the blessing of God I am in a position to do everything humanly possible to secure my son's complete recovery. The two young people are deeply in love with each other." His voice melted away in sweetness and sentimentality. "It is touching and gratifying to watch this passionate affection. We have no right to interfere."

Posener did not seem to listen. He stared into the night, his clenched fists on his knees.

"They will lead a most happy and comfortable existence," continued the patrician persuasively. "This country here is paradise, and as soon as they return home your daughter will be the most respected lady in our community. I can't see what objections a young woman could have to such a life," he concluded with a touch of offended benevolence.

Ephraim Posener turned his head away from the darkened landscape and the first stars in a steel-blue sky.

"Objections?" he said slowly. "You want to know my objections? They are, Mr. von Neel, the objections of one world against another, the objection against what you dare to call eternal truth, and I call eternal lie, to cover the brutal truth of your deeds." He spoke with hypnotic fury. "You had the militia shoot at the starving hand weavers back in 1834. You pay the lowest wages, and make pregnant women and little children work at your looms. You have profited from the misery of mankind and you have become incredibly rich that way. This is the truth of your deeds. On the other hand you bought back the castle of your bankrupt ancestors for the price of a kingdom to make it a national shrine. Everyone of your Christian Brotherhoods got a house of prayer from you but no school. Your money sends the missionaries to Africa to make the natives ashamed of their innocence, and last year you had ten thousand Bibles distributed among the slum dwellers of the mill districts. With these noble lies you cover the truth of your actions. That is why I object, Mr. von Neel! You can deceive your world of slaves and flatterers, but not me. Your son has tuberculosis and he'll die, no matter how often you offend God by naming him."

He made a pause. With his fury spent his heart remembered the irrefutable reality of Clara's love for Justus von Neel. There was something like shame in the way he suddenly turned his eyes away from the counselor.

"But what's the use telling you that? You and your kind are always right." He got up heavily, staring into the night. "Don't tell your son how you feel about this marriage. Don't poison his last medicine by mentioning the price you paid in pride and prejudice for his life. He will die soon and Clara will die with him. But until then keep quiet, sir, for God's sake and my daughter's sake keep quiet, now, since it has happened anyway."

He raised his worn hat and vanished in the dark.

Jodokus von Neel died without seeing his son again. For three years he tried in vain by promises, entreaties, and finally by bald threats to induce Justus to return from the Tyrols. A stroke felled him while he was alone in his vast mansion. During his long and bitter agony he repeated endlessly the same sentence: "Call Justus back!" But he was already dead and buried when his son arrived.

His father's will made him the sole heir to the von Neel fortune, under the explicit condition that he had to become and to remain director of the mills and president of the Christian Brotherhoods. Should he dare to reject these offices all the money was to go to the Church and he would be entitled to nothing but a small allowance.

Ephraim Posener, the doctor who tended the poor of Berlin, assigned to his daughter Clara on her husband's death all the royalties from his only profitable invention, a lanolin ointment. Shortly afterwards he died during an epidemic of typhoid fever and was buried with scores of other victims in an unmarked grave.

II. The Grandfathers

The day after the solemn publication of Jodokus von Neel's testament his son stood at his grave, bracing himself against an icy wind that blew the fumes of the mills into his face. At last his father had defeated him. He would never become president of the vast industrial concern or leader of the Christian Brotherhood, but this decision would cost him his life. Thanks to his father's will he no longer had the means to live in the south where he might check his illness that thrived in the rough smoke-filled air of the mill town.

Clara, his wife, made a desperate attempt to save her husband. Without his knowledge she visited the president of the Brotherhood who was acting as executor, leading her little son Andreas by the hand.

"We must go back to a warmer climate before it is too late. We must leave at once. Justus needs sun and clean air." Her voice was vibrant with tears and anxiety. "To live in a sanitarium costs money and the three hundred Talers granted to us in the will are not enough. The old man knew that. We need at least eight hundred to have a good physician."

"Does that mean that Brother Justus has decided to defy his father's will?" The clergyman interrupted her. "Does he refuse to become head of our church and of the mills?"

"Of course," said Clara. "How could he? He would not live if he stayed here. Besides, he never shared his father's religious convictions, and he detested his views in business matters."

At the mention of Justus von Neel's renunciation of his rights the president's face showed visible relief.

"It will be very sad indeed to see the name von Neel vanish from establishments that have made our community strong and prosperous," he lamented in pretended regret. And then suddenly aggressive: "You just saw fit to call the views of our great leader detestable. If this deplorable criticism expresses the convictions of Brother Justus then why did you come here?"

"To get your support, Mr. President. You alone can help us to obtain the money that is rightfully my husband's."

At that the man got up from his chair, a perfect picture of outraged indignation.

"Dear sister, I hope you did not come to this place to induce me to violate Brother von Neel's will?"

"Of course I did. Can't you see? It is the only way to save Justus."

"This would be sin, an unforgivable sin," the minister said menacingly.

"But it is an unforgivable sin to let an innocent man die."

"We Christians, Mrs. von Neel, have views of life and death which, I am afraid, you are unable to understand owing to your racial background. God bless you, and may He enlighten your erring mind."

It was the president who left the room as if he were no longer able to breathe the same air with Clara.

That night Justus von Neel had a hemorrhage followed by a coma. Clara sent for a doctor, a young man of her husband's age, who seemed strangely moved after having examined the patient.

"His left lung is completely gone," he said more to himself than to the anxiously listening woman, "and the right one is badly affected. I had no idea he was so ill."

"You know him?"

"We were classmates. We saw each other every day till I entered the university. When I came back it had already happened."

"What had happened?"

"He had broken with his father and left town." He looked thoughtfully at the waxen face on the bed. "I wrote him several times, but I could not convince him that he was wrong."

"But he was not wrong. How can you say that? His father was a ruthless money maker and a hypocrite."

"He was a money maker, but no hypocrite." The young doctor argued calmly and with conviction. "Old Jodokus von Neel believed that what he did was in accordance with the divine will. He took his material success as proof of this consent. For him protestantism was a deal between humanity and God, allowing man the unfettered use of the reason, skill, and ambition granted him by providence."

"But how could he justify his enormous profits before God?"

"He could; in the name of progress, he could. Didn't his money make the world a better, more perfect place?" The doctor looked past Clara out of the window to where the smoke-stacks of the mills pointed like road signs into a clear winter sky. "Where before men toiled endlessly and blunderingly, machines are now doing a faultless job. Better selling prices for better goods mean better wages. Railways, printing presses, the telegraph, were invented by men like old von Neel, men with courage and a longing for progress."

"And what about the workmen?" asked Clara bitterly. "Is their plight another proof of the successful struggle for perfection?"

"Certainly not, but we are still in a transitory stage. With industry growing rapidly the employer becomes more and more dependent on the worker. He will have to improve the laborer's living conditions or he will fall short of the most important factor in the production process." He took a deep breath. "One day everybody will share in the results of this great civilization.

"That's a Utopia." Justus von Neel had opened his eyes. "It's nice to see you once more, Curt, but you are still as wrong as you were years ago. I heard all you said. I only was too tired to speak." He lifted his hand to greet his old friend. "Remember the day you left for the university? You were angry with me, weren't you?" He smiled wistfully. "I always wanted you to acknowledge you were wrong in calling me a coward. Now it doesn't hurt any more."

He paused, fighting for breath.

"You should not talk." Clara put her hand on his forehead. "You must rest."

But Justus shook his head.

"Let me speak to Curt. It does not matter anyhow; I know I have to go soon. For years I have longed for this opportunity. Sit down, Curt, we shall not meet again. You were the only friend I had here. I always wanted to tell you what really drove me away from the mills, what was more decisive than the quarrels with my father." He closed his eyes, going back in his mind over the long painful way of his youth.

"You see, Curt, this new production method can only work successfully by a ruthless selection of man power. Only the most adaptable worker will be retained in this process of higher and higher specialization, and if he learns to take care of his own rights he might one day share in the results of our civilization. But the others, the millions of men who by their very nature do not pass the test of modern production, will face unbelievable squalor. I have seen them, Curt; I have watched them go to pieces. They come to town, hand weavers who used to sit in a quiet farmhouse, creating the old patterns they knew by heart, or the clumsy childish peasant boys who whistled old songs while they ploughed the fields or split rails. They or their women folk are fascinated by the town and by the luxuries money can buy. And what happens? They can't do it, they just can't stand a mill and all it means." He had tears in his eyes. "Curt, you know, you are a doctor. You have seen their mangled hands and feet when they get caught in the machines, and you have seen how they live in the tenements my father rented them for fifteen Talers a month!" He was shaken by coughing, and blood foam appeared on his lips. "No," he whispered. "I could not be accomplice to a crime that would make hundreds of thousands of human beings unhappy."

"Yes, I have seen those poor devils who get smashed," said the doctor. "I see them every day and I try my best to help them. You may consider me cruel and heartless, but still I can't help looking at their fates as rather irrelevant compared with the great progress of mankind." He got up and put his hand on his friend's. "Go to sleep now, Justus. As long as you are sure you did the right thing when you left the mills you have nothing to regret." He stood for a moment, looking down with deep pity at the face on the pillow. "I wish this hadn't happened to you. I wish we two could have fought it out together."

After he had gone Justus lay with wide open eyes.

"Did you hear, Clara, what he said? Father considered his success as proof of the consent of God. It was just that, this unquestionable familiarity of father and his associates with a higher power, that shook my inner security. I clung to my humble God, who is an impersonal and impartial intelligence and does not serve for material interests. I could not let go of this image. It was the only inner hold I possessed in this world of business and technique. But by and by I started to lose my feeling of certainty. I felt poor and refuted in the shadow of all this success that was evident even after the most outrageous injustices had been committed on a multitude of defenseless people. Only much later, after I had gained your love, Clara, I realized that to become as rich as father is a curse covered by golden armor, a punishment, not a blessing. I knew I had only a short time to live. That's why I chose the other way. I could not sell my soul!"

Justus recuperated sufficiently to go through the few formalities necessary for the renunciation of all his rights. He left the town of his birth, unnoticed by ten thousand pious souls who had learned from his father to reconcile faith and money-making in such a profitable way.

He spent the last months of his life in a small apartment on the outskirts of the capital, immersed in the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas and the German mystic philosophers. As his body dissolved under his illness, his soul dissolved in a world of pure transcendentalism. But even the veils of mysticism could not prevent him from being haunted in his dreams by the hungry looks of the weavers' children and the click of gold and silver coins. The years in the south had dimmed the experiences in his father's office, but the weeks back home had revived the old horrors, and they were riding him with increased speed to his death.

With the instinct of love Clara had realized that she could not prevent, only defer, by building around Justus a world of beauty and purity. She could not follow him into the abstract realms of mysticism, for Ephraim Posener had trained her intellect too well, but she and Justus found each other in their devotion to music.

She had a wonderful voice, and he never tired of hearing her sing Bach's hymns, and songs by Schubert and Mendelssohn. She was a dutiful mother to her son, but never more. Each hour with her husband weighed twofold by its irretrievability, each joy, she hoped, would ease his death. When shortly after their arrival in the city she became aware of another pregnancy, she kept it a secret lest Justus' mind might be burdened with sorrow.

He died serenely and reconciled to his fate in the arms of Clara, who had only one wish — to die with him. But she did not die; she did not even fall ill of her husband's disease. Three months after Justus' death she gave birth to a girl, but she did not smile when she was shown the fine strong baby. She never smiled again, and when she died forty years later her eyes still looked as if blinded by tears.

It was past midnight on the day of the sweepstake celebration in Olmsfeld when Babette, the smith's eldest daughter, knocked at the gate of the posthouse. A tall young man with reddish hair and light penetrating eyes opened the door.

"The children are so tired," she said in embarrassment. "Father won't drive home. Would you let us stay in the stable till tomorrow morning?"

It took the postmaster's son a long time to find an answer, and the painful silence made the girl feel so humiliated, she started to cry. This was a signal for the baby on her arms and the younger children, clinging to her skirt, to join in. The young man gazed in utter bewilderment at the crying group; then he turned his head to look up to the second floor where he knew his mother was praying behind locked doors. And for the first time in his life Kuno Dallmann made a decision of which she would have disapproved. He guided the strange procession of boys and girls across the big sloping yard to the guest house. While Babette put the children to bed he waited outside on the landing. He had no reason to wait there, except that he felt he could not leave before all was quiet.

After the children's voices had died down, the girl came out.

"I wanted to thank you," she said timidly. "Without you, I don't know what would have happened." Kuno laughed a little, looking curiously at her.

"It was nothing, really, just my duty. Why don't you go to bed too?"

"I would rather not." She brushed her tired eyes with a workworn hand. "I would fall asleep and wouldn't hear the children. They might wake up and get scared in a strange room."

"I could wait here," offered Kuno but Babette refused.

"Men can't mind children," she said with sudden bitterness. "They can only think about themselves."

She sat down on the top step and leaned her head against the wall, prepared for a long vigil. Kuno did not know what to say. He sat down beside her, musing with his head in his hands over her strange criticism of men.

Kuno Dallmann had reached manhood only externally. The hard energy of his grandfather Cranborn, and the narrow-minded righteousness of his mother, had built walls of prejudice around him. He was a thinker, naturally logical and thorough, but the isolation of his youth had kept him mute. At the age of eighteen he began teaching elementary school in Olmsfeld but he showed neither enthusiasm nor dislike for his work. He was like a star without relationship to the moving universe. Once roused from his stagnation he would, like a meteor, follow the drive of his inner law, unshrinking and fearless, but the impact that would send him on his course was late; he was twenty-one years old when he met Babette Kretzschmar.

For the first time he was alone with a young woman, close enough to touch her hand and feel her breath. A flickering tallow candle on the banister gave mysterious lights and shadows to her face, and it lighted up the dark barrenness of his lonely life. He wanted to speak; for the first time he wanted to express what he lacked and had never known. But Babette was asleep. Unrelaxed she slept with the determination of someone used to perpetual discomfort and interruption. She had the tender features of a peasant madonna but there was a bitterness around her mouth that never seemed to vanish. Kuno studied that face line by line, and the intensity of his look was so strong that she opened her eyes.

"Oh, you're still there. You see, I told you I'd fall asleep. It's a shame."

She got up from the step, smoothing her plain gingham dress.

"Good night." Reluctantly Kuno offered his hand. "I hope you'll get some rest."

"Please don't go." Babette smiled for the first time. "Please keep me company. I simply have to stay awake. The baby hasn't been well lately."

No one had ever asked Kuno for his company. He made a formal bow and pointed to the step.

"If I don't bother you . . . shall we sit down again?"

Silence, the awkward silence of very young people not yet trained in the routine of facile conversation. As one of the children stirred, Babette tiptoed into the room. When she returned Kuno said:

"You are as good as a mother to these children. You must love them very much."

She looked straight into his eyes.

"No, I don't love them, but with mother ill there is nobody else to take care of them."

"Then — I — think — what — you — are — doing — is — even — greater." Kuno spoke slowly like one unaccustomed to formulate his thoughts.

"Why?" Babette was puzzled. Her frankness did not mean that she did not feel guilty about her lack of affection.

"Because," each word fell heavily from Kuno's lips, "because you must have conquered some other stronger desire in you before you could give all your strength to an unloved duty."

This was a language so new to the young girl that she did not know what to answer. She sat there, her head bent in listening, hungry for more of this interest that no one had ever taken in her.

"What is it?" asked the young man. "I mean, what is your real ambition in life?"

He looked at her with penetrating eyes, and suddenly she understood what he meant. His question had opened a hidden door.

"Comedy," she said dreamily, "theater, that's what I want. I know, of course, they are bad people," she added, blushing. "Everybody says so. But they're happy, they must be. I know."

"Who?"

"The comedians who play at the fair in Joachimsthal. I saw them three years ago and then this year. They are lucky."

"Why?" asked Kuno. Now it was he who was puzzled.

"If they don't like their lives, if all is wrong, they can make another world for themselves. They can change into people who are beautiful, great, rich."

She made a wide sweep with her hand. "They live somewhere else, and nobody can get at them."

"You would like to be a comedienne?" asked Kuno, uneasy.

"I don't know." Babette sounded a little ashamed. "Perhaps not a comedienne, but I would like to do as they do, think I was somebody else."

"And why can't you do that?"

She glanced quickly at the bedroom door.

"I have to care for nine children, for mother, and —" with an embarrassed pause, "sometimes for father when he has had too much. When I'm through for the day I'm all tired out."

"But that will change." The bitterness of her tone hurt Kuno. "Your father is rich now. He will get help, and you'll be free to do what you like."

The young face twisted in disgust.

"He'll not leave this town till the last penny is spent. You take my word for it. When we get back to Nerosov we shall be poorer than before."

There was nothing for Kuno to say after that. The silence fell over them like a blanket, and in a short time Babette was asleep again, her head resting unwittingly on Kuno's shoulder.

Dawn was shining through the staircase window when he heard heavy steps shuffle over the yard. He managed to push the drowsy girl into one of the rooms before his mother reached the guest house. Paralyzed by a feeling of panic he met her leaning against Babette's door.

"Where were you all night?"

Every fibre in him rebelled against telling a lie, but to his bewilderment the urge to protect Babette was stronger.

"It was too noisy on the square," he said, avoiding his mother's eyes. "I tried to sleep in one of the guest rooms."

"It does not look as if you got much rest. You didn't even undress. They are gone now. Go into your own bed." She gave him a suspicious glance and went back to the main house.

Kuno slept till a heavy cart rolled noisily over the cobblestones of the post yard. Excited voices; a woman's scream. When Kuno ran to the window he saw two peasants carrying the drenched bodies of Sebastian Dallmann and Jan Kretzschmar into the stables.

His father's death caused a confusing reaction in him. At first there was no pain, only the dull impact of a blunt blow. Over many years Cranborn's allusions about the wickedness of the postmaster, and Susanne's humiliating negligence of her husband's existence, had created an atmosphere of mutual indifference between father and son. But with adolescence Kuno had discovered in his heart a strange affection for Sebastian. When the postmaster had been sitting at the huge desk in the front room of the post house, dealing calmly and gaily with travellers and postillions, his son had watched him from behind his textbooks. And he had felt the radiance of his father's personality without being able to understand him. At night after everyone was gone, the old and the young man had looked at each other, the father with the great treasure of suppressed tenderness in his heart, and the son with groping uncertainty, trying to break down prejudice and suspicion. But neither had been able to speak; their time had not yet come. The postmaster had stretched his arms, yawning heartily, and had gone to bed with a last lonely look at his boy.

Now that he was dead it was not reverence, rather a restless curiosity, that drove Kuno to go to the barn for a last look at his father. Two men were wrapping the bodies of the postmaster and the smith in horse blankets.

"What are you doing? Can't you wait till the coffins come?"

One of the men, an old stable hand, looked up.

"There won't be any coffins. The school principal told us to take them away in blankets."

"Where to?"

"Potter's Field." He wiped his eyes.

A stab of shock pierced Kuno's body.

"Take your hands off my father," he said menacingly. "Get out of here."

And as the men hesitated — the school principal was a powerful man — he suddenly roared in a voice that was totally unknown to himself:

"Get out."

With shaking hands he freed his father's face from the rough cover. The postmaster's features were relaxed; there had not been time for decay. Kuno stared at the quiet man and the bitter frustration of wasted opportunity crept into his conscience. Word by word, deed by deed, he traced his father's personality, and he knew that he had loved him and never had found the courage to express what he felt. Cowardice; laziness of heart. His wounded mind bored through layers of falsification to get to the core from which the poison had come. And suddenly he saw his grandfather, not as the stiff sulky schoolmaster, but as malice personified. Men ceased to exist. Kuno was alone on the earth confronted with evil as a living principle.

The schoolmaster was not in the house when Kuno came to square the bill; he was not in the school either. Kuno finally found him in the town hall where a meeting of the community council was under way. Breathless he broke into the assembly room and with a powerful grip at the teacher's carefully pleated jabot he lifted the old man out of his chair.

"The stable hands say there won't be a burial for my father. Where will he rest?" He shook the old man violently. "Answer, and talk fast."

Cranborn looked into the furious face, speechless not so much from fear but from the startling change in the features he had known for twenty-one years.

"Let go of me, you young fool," he finally said in an attempt to sound preceptorial. "You're forgetting yourself, and you'll be punished for your insolence."

"Where will my father be buried?" Kuno raised his left hand to Cranborn's throat. But the mayor caught him by the shoulders and forced him to let go.

"In heaven's name, Kuno, what are you doing? Have you forgotten to whom you're talking?" Kuno turned away from his grandfather and looked at the mayor with bloodshot eyes.

"He's a murderer, you know. He killed my father by locking the gates, and now he wants him put away in Potter's Field."

"My dear Kuno," said the mayor, wincing, "please calm yourself. The decision to bury your father without Christian rites has been made by all of us, and it has of course nothing to do with our high esteem for your mother and for you. The dignity of the church and the eternal laws of the Holy Bible don't permit the burial of an atheist and a — a possible self-murderer in the blessed soil of a churchyard, especially — especially if it is possible, yes, indeed, probable that this person, you understand, this person met death while intoxicated."

He sat down, sweating, but visibly satisfied that his speech had maintained the dignity of his office.

Kuno Dallmann, his hair in disorder, his collar open, and his face wasted by hatred that had accumulated for ten years below his consciousness, groaned like a wounded beast. He could not fight them all, twelve husky men barricaded behind their unanimity. Slowly, groggily, he turned around and left the town hall.

While the horses were being hitched he went over the yard to the guest house. Babette sat on the bed, her face wet with tears. The children played noisily on the landing. Without the awkwardness that had impeded his words and gestures only twelve hours ago, Kuno took her hand.

"Please come," he said kindly. "I'll take you and the children home. This is no longer a safe place for you. It is a vicious town, only I didn't know it."

He drove toward the mountains in the same coach that had carried Jan Kretzschmar and his gold bag the day before. When he reached the pass from where the road descends into Bohemia, he stopped the horses.

"I have to get out here," he said. "I have to find a resting place for them. You keep the carriage and the horses. You can sell them."

Without lifting her arms from the shoulders of her little sisters, who huddled beside her, Babette said wearily:

"You have been very good to us."

With stiff legs an old stableman climbed from the rear of the coach and helped Kuno to lift down the two bodies wrapped in blankets.

"Say good-bye to him," Kuno said to Babette. "He was your father."

But Babette looked into blank space.

"Please," repeated Kuno. "Do it for me." And for a moment he ventured to put his hand on her arm. Her eyes, red with weeping, met his.

"He was no father," she said. "He only wanted to live his own life, always and only his own."

"But it made him happy at times," said Kuno, and felt amazement at his own words. "He fought what he hated and held what he loved. We don't."

Babette's mouth narrowed to a sharp line. Her stooped back straightened and her hands gathered the reins in determination.

"May it help him to attain redemption!"

And with a firm pull she started the horses, leaving Kuno behind without a farewell.

Sebastian Dallmann and Jan Kretzschmar were now buried in the stony mountain ground. The old servant had vanished silently as if he had been a partner in a stealthy crime. Wearily Kuno leaned upon the spade that had blistered his untrained hands. He saw the land unfold before his eyes in wide undulation: forests, pastures, fields in harmonious patterns. Wild geese with passionate cries passed under clouds cast in mysterious shapes. The air was scented with the strong aroma of dying leaves, sunburned pines, ripe mushrooms and moist soil. Far below stretched the highway, a regulating median in this exuberant nature.

And twenty years of falsification and deceit were blotted out by the grandeur of this scenery through which Sebastian's life had passed. Like a coat his son shed the past and stood naked, cast from the spirit of a dead man. He understood what had given his father strength to maintain the free flight of his soul among people who had known him, and yet had dared to refuse him the wretched right to be buried in their midst. No one was present to make him feel ashamed, and Kuno could cry out the torture and relief of his liberation.

With the dawn of day he was back at the post house, frightening his mother and grandfather with a new adult face that tolerated neither pity nor curiosity. He fought hard for his share of Sebastian's wealth. Only after he threatened to call in the law did Cranborn knuckle under. Only then did he realize that he had lost his last stake to the dead enemy.

*

Kuno Dallmann had chosen a university far from home. No influence from Olmsfeld could reach him there. He took to learning as to a drug, and his first year was spent in such a feverish search for knowledge that he noticed little of the life around him. Starting with Amos Comenius and his bold idea of a state-supported educational system, he groped his way through Pascal, Rousseau and Lavater to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who had died only nineteen years before. As he realized the tremendous sum of human effort expended through the ages to deal wisely with youth, a burning desire to add with his life work to this testimony of man's responsibility for man took hold of him. He was profoundly unpolitical, and he took little note of the violent discussions about constitution or absolutism, monarchy or republic, taxation and the redistribution of wealth, that filled the year 1847. But once he had become sure of his calling as an educator, he began looking around, weighing the influence of various forms of government upon the educational system. And he found the schools in a sad state. It was the hope of a bloodless state reform, aiming at general education as an equal opportunity for every citizen, which finally drove him into the ranks of the rebels.

The revolutionary movement which in other German states had soon ended in a compromise between reaction and reform, maintained a radical character in the small country of Baden where Kuno Dallmann lived. Here the demand was for an outright republic. After months of underground activities devoted to propaganda among workmen and peasants, the revolutionary student council met for the last time in the backroom of an inn to approve the ultimatum to the Grand Duke of Baden. The terms were so radical that the Duke would never be able to accept them. His refusal would leave as the only alternatives the proclamation of a republic, or civil war.

Kuno Dallmann, though a member of the council's educational committee, had had no part in the actual preparations of this last step. He was working on his thesis, and he had deliberately kept away from obligations that would divert his energy. When the group of young men assembled under Hecker's leadership in the dimly lit room, he listened with growing concern to the ultimatum.

"To His Highness, the Grand Duke of Baden.

On the blood-drenched field of the Battle of Nations the kings and princes of Europe knelt down and vowed freedom for their peoples. Their oath was false. Suppression, exploitation, blind force against the thinking citizen, unlimited privileges for 449 royal idlers, and a constant refusal to fulfill the promise of a constitution, have made the people suspicious of Your Highness' person. The people we mean are no longer the vague idea of the past; no, we mean all the people, yes, Your Highness, all! Even the military forces have declared their unanimity.

The people have commissioned a revolutionary committee to demand:

1. Occupation of all ministries by men possessing the confidence of the people.
2. An independent people's representation, elected by free, secret ballot of all citizens over twenty-one years of age,

on the basis of one representative for each 100,000 souls.

3. The drafting of a constitution by this parliament.
4. Unrestricted freedom of press and speech.
5. Immediate, unconditional release of political prisoners.
6. Taxation in accordance with actual income.
7. Citizenship for everyone.
8. Reorganization of the courts and the introduction of lay juries.
9. Permission for every citizen to carry arms.
   Election of all officers by the army ranks.
10. Equalization of labor and capital.

We allow your Highness three days to come to a decision. If these three days pass without an answer, the people will know that Your Highness has rejected their demands. Then the black, red and gold banner will be unfurled over the land, carrying the message to every house and every heart:

'From the bondage of night
through bloody struggle
to the golden dawn of freedom.'

Give us what we ask: FREEDOM, or we will take it in our own right."

Stormy applause followed the reading. The chairman asked each of the twenty men to step to the table and sign the ultimatum. But when Kuno Dallmann's turn came he did not take the pen.

"Friends, I can't sign." There was shocked silence in the room. "I am not one of those cowards who would rather make peace with the people's enemies than stand up for our rights. I would give my life gladly if I were convinced that you and I were fighting for the same aims. In your ultimatum to the Grand Duke you ask for equal taxation, redistribution of wealth, the right to carry arms, and the right to judge your neighbor. These are purely materialistic demands where spiritual values should be secured. You don't ask for state schools and free education for every child in this country, or for a teacher training equal to university standards, or for abolition of church control over schools. These, my friends, are the aims I am fighting for. They constitute the basis on which a happier and wiser generation of Germans will grow. They can't be achieved by bloodshed but only by example and the patient belief in the eternal force of evolution. As an educator I cannot take part in violence."

He ran blindly through dark streets, the bitterness of his new isolation and the triumphant pride of having defended his convictions contending in his heart. He did not hear the hasty steps in back of him. He was much too engrossed in his own fate, which he had irrevocably separated from the political struggle of his people. Only when his sleeve was caught by a hand and he was dragged into a dark passage did he remember that this was the eve of a revolution.

"Jesus and Mary! You certainly have long legs," panted the voice of a woman. "I ran after you all the way from the inn."

"What do you want?"

"Don't go home," whispered the breathless voice. "The soldiers were at your place. They searched all your papers and left a guard behind to catch you when you get back."

There was a volley of shots in the distance.

"How do you know?" Kuno tried to identify the voice, since the face was completely in the dark.

"Just luck," said the woman. "One of the officers talked. The inn was already surrounded when the meeting of the student council started. They only waited till everybody had signed up, to have the names in black and white."

"Who are you?" Kuno grew suspicious of the anonymous informer. He pulled the woman a few steps farther down the passage, where a dim light came through shutters.

"Don't you recognize me? I'm Veronika, the waitress from the inn."

Kuno now saw her round face, which looked a little frightened. She was a very pretty young woman, chosen by the revolutionary council as a waitress on account of her reliability. Kuno had always liked her, but his great shyness had prevented him from exchanging more than the usual phrases with her.

"Why didn't you warn the others?" he asked harshly, realizing that his friends must have fallen into the trap.

"I couldn't," assured the girl. "Honestly, I couldn't. I would have done it, as truly as I live, but the master had sent me for hay. When I came back with the first load the house was already surrounded. They wouldn't allow anyone to enter the backroom."

"But why would they let me get away?"

" 'We'll catch him in his own den,' was what the sergeant said. 'Let him run. He'd stir up the whole neighborhood if we arrested him in the street. We can grill him better out there.' " Kuno lived in a lonely house in the suburbs.

"But Jesus and Mary!" cried Veronika suddenly. "Here we stand talking and talking. We must get away before they find out that you didn't go home."

There were more shots, and the rush of fleeing feet. The girl dragged Kuno to the other end of the dark passage.

"Come, in Heaven's name, come. Don't you understand?"

Something in Kuno rebelled against death. The words with which he had outlined his life program a few minutes earlier still resounded in his heart. He had to live to fight for his goal. From the main street came the noise of boots — outcries — shots — and sudden silence. They crawled along an irrigation ditch, waited knee-deep in water under a bridge till the soldiers passed over it, sneaked along backyards and over a barn roof, and reached a grove outside the town. A mule was grazing peacefully among the trees. Beside a haystack stood an old-fashioned rack-wagon.

"Get in there," said the girl, "quickly."

Before Kuno could find out what she had in mind the soft hay closed over his face, and worn out by work and excitement he fell asleep.

Veronika drove over the wooden Rhine bridge into Switzerland. After leaving the cart and the mule with her brother in the

Baseler Altstadt, she took the bewildered student to a little attic in an ancient house. With a sigh of relief she threw herself on the bed.

"Safe! Safe! Oh Jesus and Mary! We're safe!"

Kuno Dallmann stood awkwardly in the middle of the room, his head close to the darkened beams. "Miss Veronika," he said with a faltering voice, "I owe you my life. I have nothing to reward you with, nothing but this life which you saved. Will you marry me?"

Veronika, who had been overflowing with relief and gaiety, looked open-mouthed at the long thin man. And then she laughed so mockingly, that Kuno turned abruptly on his heels and made for the door. With one leap she was up and at his side.

"I didn't want to hurt you, honestly. You are a good man, a man of honor. I always knew it when I served your table in the inn. But you can't marry me, not a nobody like me. You are a learned man, but I am only a waitress who can neither read nor write. It wouldn't be right to hang on to you all your life. I am no wife for you."

She sat down again on the bed, but she did not laugh any longer. Her face was grave, and her young mouth bitter. Kuno looked at her broodingly. He could not understand why she had saved him.

"You don't know what it means to scrub floors, rinse jugs, roll barrels sixteen hours a day. To serve everybody who feels like playing a dirty joke, to take it silently when the master feels like kicking you with his boots."

She spoke quietly, in a dry voice, but tears came to Kuno's eyes. He sat down beside her and silently took her rough hand.

"I don't want a price for your freedom," she finished, "I want to love you. That's all." She took his head firmly in her hands and kissed his unawakened lips.

Veronika found work at an inn nearby while Kuno went on with his studies. No matter how often he repeated his offer to marry her, she always declined.

"Can't you see what happened to your revolution that wanted to make all of us equal? A company of soldiers in the prison yard and every rebel digging his own grave. We can't change the world, you and I, we all belong where we were born. No use jumping fences. I would be a stone around your neck. I want to be your luck, not your misfortune."

Kuno Dallmann and Veronika Balzer lived together for two years. She died in childbed because she had worked too long to earn what they needed, since Cranborn had seen to it that not a penny went over the border to Kuno.

With Veronika's death something broke in him that could not be mended. The contrast between the merciless isolation of his youth and Veronika's deep devotion had been too profound. Compared to this love all human contact would seem grey and vulgar.

A friend helped him get a job as village teacher in a little community in the Alps. After months of coma he began to realize that only work would save him from insanity. He started to collect material for a biography of his guide and master Pestalozzi. Step by step he followed the bitter path of the great educator's life. When finally he reached Iferten, the last of Pestalozzi's pedagogic visions, Kuno Dallmann felt a deep affinity between the many stages of hope, endeavor, and final crucifixion, and his own fate that with dark premonition was ever present in his heart. But these years of research also gave him the strength to carry on in spite of the certainty of his own doom.

"Not knowledge, but the strength to acquire knowledge" — would be the maxim for his future work as it had been Pestalozzi's leading principle.

Six years after he had crossed the Swiss border an amnesty for political offenders allowed him to return home. Cranborn was dead, and Susanne had been worn down by old age and loneliness. She did not resist when Kuno decided to sell the concession and the post house. The proceeds were sufficient for the purchase of an old mansion surrounded by a beautiful park near the Saxon capital. There Kuno Dallmann opened the first modern preparatory school and college for boys. His Pestalozzi book and a series of articles had been published and translated into English and French. The attention of all progressive educators in Europe was focused on Kuno Dallmann's experimental school and he soon had students from many different countries.

The year he opened the college he married Babette Kretzschmar. He did not love her. Since Veronika's death all personal emotion had vanished from his heart. The picture of her dying face, still beautiful and unbelievably pure, had eclipsed all human faces. But he felt an inner obligation to fulfil the silent promise he had once made to Babette. She had gone through hard years. The little money left after Jan Kretzschmar's death had been hardly enough to bring up nine brothers and sisters, and to care for her sick mother. When after ten long years Kuno asked for her hand, she was so overwhelmed by the prospect of leaving this life of misery that she felt nothing but gratitude. She tried to forget that year after year she had waited in vain for a single word from him, and she tried not to hear his confession that owing to certain events in his past he felt friendship but no passion for her.

It was only after their wedding that these words came back into her memory. They were putting books and papers in the huge secretary that once had served the postmaster, when a piece of paper fell to the floor. Kuno picked it up, and said without embarrassment:

"I would like to have that framed if you don't mind."

"Why should I mind?" said Babette. "What is it?"

She took the paper from Kuno's hand. It was a pen drawing of a grave. On a simple slab of stone the name "Veronika Balzer" was engraved, and underneath: "But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

"A grave?" she said uneasily. "Who is buried there?"

"Veronika," said Kuno, and for the last time he felt the loved name on his lips. "I told you there have been experiences in my life which were decisive for me. Veronika saved my life in 1848, and she saved my heart when I was in exile. Now she is dead."

Babette looked breathlessly at her husband.

"You have loved somebody else? Did you love her very much?"

Kuno nodded.

"Of what did she die?"

For a moment Kuno's glance moved in indecision over Babette's face. But he was who he was. He had to drag the truth out of his heart, in spite of the wounds he knew it would make.

"We had a child together, but it did not live."

"A child?" Babette's voice became shrill. "You have been married before and you did not tell me?"

"We were not married," said Kuno in the same calm voice. "She wanted it that way. It was her decision."

"Not married, and a child? You have lived with a whore, you have had children with a whore, and I did not know?"

In a wild rage she threw herself against Kuno, striking him in the face again and again with her clenched fists.

"Go," she cried, "go to your whore! You have soiled me and my name to cover your filthy life. Go, go to your whores!"

Kuno caught her wrists and forced her into a chair.

"Don't say that again," he said very slowly.

Babette's tears ceased. She looked at the tall man in front of her with deep hatred.

"You are like my father," she said, "you are father."

Kuno forced a reconciliation, but from then on Babette watched him with hysterical jealousy. To take revenge for what she believed he had done to her she neglected her duties as a housekeeper for the large college. Even with good will she would not have been able to tackle this task. She lacked organizing ability and experience in management. Before long everything was in disorder. Her incertitude made her harsh and impatient toward servants who repaid her by pilfering and leaving their jobs. The food became unsatisfactory and students started to leave the school while the maintenance costs mounted. Four pregnancies and the care of four boys ruined her nerves. When public attacks against her husband's work become more and more dangerous, she had neither the strength nor the inner solidarity to support him.

Kuno Dallmann fought alone and he fought well but society finally hunted him down. The lack of a religious instructor was the first complaint made against him. He proved that there were too many different creeds represented among his students to justify only one kind of religious training. But everyone in the community knew that he never attended church, and that he had not been present at the christening of his sons. That weakened his argument. He finally gave in and appointed a liberal Lutheran preacher; but this problem had hardly been solved when local newspapers printed vicious attacks against the lack of morals in the institute. A pond on the school grounds had been used by students and faculty as a swimming pool, and though a wooden enclosure had been erected, curious citizens got glimpses of the school principal playing water ball with his students, or running bare-chested on a dirt track. In 1868 this was an unheard of liberty. A maid, discharged by Babette, gave vent to her hatred by making maliciously false statements about sexual experiences in the school. An indictment by the Board of Education was followed by a long and disgusting investigation; and though teachers and students published a declaration of solidarity, it did much to diminish the enrolment and to aggravate Kuno's financial situation.

On the political scene the victory of dark reaction over the revolution of 1848 started to bear evil fruit. The natural leadership of Prussia as the largest of the German states had developed into brutal despotism. The smaller countries had either to adjust their own policy to the absolutistic regime of this leadership, or face economic and military persecution. Saxony had suffered severely during the war of 1866, when it had taken sides with Austria to prevent a forced unification of all German states under

Bismarck's dictatorship. The sweeping victory of the Iron Chancellor left Kuno's country prostrate and impoverished, governed by a puppet regime that hastened to appease the victor by reactionary measures. Kuno Dallmann had taken no open stand when taxes became unbearable, when labor leaders and Socialists were hunted down by Prussian agents, and when the Saxon constitution — the oldest one of all the German states — was constantly violated. But when Bismarck decreed that all the kindergartens for underprivileged children were to be closed because they were hatching places of "socialist criminals" Kuno Dallmann could no longer keep silent. He was an ardent admirer of Friedrich Froebel's ideas, and he published in his weekly school report a vigorous attack, calling Bismarck an ignorant rowdy. But it was too late to arouse efficient opposition. The kindergartens were closed, and Kuno Dallmann's protest served the public authorities as a means to get rid of him and his annoying school. He was accused of subversive tendencies and his school license cancelled.

The Dallmann family was sitting — a small group — in the enormous dining room which once had served three hundred students. Babette dished out the simple meal but Kuno did not start to eat. He stared at the empty chair where his oldest son Amos used to sit. His tardiness for the family meal was without precedent. Kuno Dallmann enforced among his children the same strict discipline he had maintained in his school because he considered self-restraint and self-sacrifice the basis of a civilized society.

When the little boy finally rushed into the room his cheeks were burning with excitement.

"We have won," he shouted with sparkling eyes. "We are the victors. The King of Prussia has routed those damned French. At Sedan Bismarck has killed forty thousand of them, and eighty thousand are our prisoners!"

He wanted to sit down for his meal but his father had already grabbed him by both shoulders and was pushing him toward the wall.

"You — " he gasped, "You — stop it, stop!" And he spat in the child's face. Amos tried to flee, but before he could reach the door his father had caught up with him. With two terrific blows he knocked him against the wall and spat again in the white face. Then he spun around and fell to the floor in a fainting spell that lasted for many hours.

He later had no recollection of the day of Sedan which decided the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. During his long illness he often asked for Amos and was tender and kind to him. But the child's face never again lost a deeply frightened expression.

He recovered in time to defend his own case before the supreme court and succeeded in having his prison sentence for insult of the state authority changed to three years confinement in a citadel without the loss of civic rights. But he never served it. While he delivered his final address he became delirious, addressed the president as "Cranborn," and accused him of patricide.

One year later he died in an insane asylum.

III. Grandfather's Children

After her husband's death Babette Dallmann started a strange new life dedicated to a thorough extermination of all the memories connected with her husband. She sold every book of his excellent library; every piece of furniture used by him, every garment, and the many small tokens denoting a human life went to second-hand dealers. With the money received she bought copy after copy of Kuno Dallmann's writings to burn them in lonely orgies of hatred. After the work was done and she could be reasonably sure that not even a photograph reminded the world that a man named Kuno Dallmann had ever lived, she withdrew into a world of pretentious artistry. With a small group of congenial companions she adored mellow music, read Scribe, Kotzebue and Birch-Pfeiffer, and tried to paint in the style of the English Pre-Raphaelite school. Her four sons had no place in this realm of romantic escape, and at times Babette completely forgot about their existence. It was as if the excessive responsibility for nine brothers and sisters had exhausted her ability to love.

Jan, Erwin and Franz, the three younger boys, showed no visible effects of this neglect. They had developed tough skins and they looked for fun wherever they could get it. But the oldest, Amos, did not share their pastimes. He had been old enough to grasp the full horror of his father's illness, and to the end of his life he battled the crushing fact that he was the son of a lunatic. He was thin and delicate, which excluded him from rough play, and he had burning red hair, which made him a favorite target for the rude jokes of other children. If he had shared in the wealth of daily love which decides the happiness of a childhood, he would have overcome these handicaps. But in the thoughtless isolation in which Babette left her children there was no other salvation for the sensitive boy than to hope that by painstakingly correct behavior he might one day become an accepted member of society.

On a glamorless Christmas Eve the three younger Dallmanns sat with Nubuk, the caretaker, in his filthy basement room. To celebrate the occasion, the old man was more drunk than usual. In a hoarse voice he sang hymns and obscene soldier songs, and entertained his guests with wild adventure stories of his past as a sailor. Amos was not with them. He squatted on one of the granite steps of the entrance, heedless of a piercing drizzle that fell from the dark sky, and stared straight ahead where he could see the windows of the gardener's house between the trees. Behind the panes shone the lights of a Christmas tree, and when Amos held his breath he could hear singing:

Come shepherds, come children,
Come women and men,
Come see the Christchild
Who lies in the pen.
Christ our Savior
Has now been born,
Saving the hope
Long so forlorn.
Be without fear!

But Amos was afraid. He was alone and his heart was full of bitterness.

It was there that Justine von Neel found him when she tiptoed out of the house. One of the first tenants Babette Dallmann had taken into the huge abandoned school building had been Justus von Neel's quiet widow and her two children, Justine and Andreas.

"Are you crying?" asked Justine. "Boys don't cry. Don't you know?"

Silently Amos got up and walked down the steps.

"I'm sad too." The girl followed at his heels. "But I don't cry. No, I never cry." And at that tears started to stream down her face.

They walked side by side through the dark park, two sobbing children in the rain. When they went through the gate Amos asked:

"Where are you going?"

With her little round muff Justine brushed the tears from her face and looked at Amos — full of secrets.

"To church. They have music there and people. Many people, fathers and grandparents. They smile at you when you know your carols."

"Do you have a Christmas tree at home?" asked Amos.

"No." It came very low from the little girl's lips. "Mother, you know — she always thinks of father. Have you a tree?"

Amos shook his head, his eyes searching for the lighted windows of the gardener's house.

"But in church they have trees — that big." Justine stretched her arm high above her head. And suddenly Amos was no longer afraid. He grabbed her hand and ran down the street. When they returned they smiled. Warmth, light, music, and the community of celebrating people had comforted them magically. They had forgotten that their mothers had abandoned them for the dead.

This was the common ground on which Amos Dallmann and Justine von Neel found each other when they were both eight years old. In the following twenty-five years their lives drifted hopelessly apart, but they never lost a certainty of each other's existence. When they were finally married at the age of thirty-three, their widely differing experiences did not matter. It was those first tears, shed together on Christmas Eve over a world of frustrated love, which bound them for life.

Relatives of Justus von Neel had decided to support his widow when it became evident that she was destitute. They did it neither for friendship nor for charity, and they never missed an occasion to stress this fact. They were frankly afraid that the family prestige might suffer from a total economic collapse of these embarrassing relatives. It was their money that sent Justine and her brother Andreas to exclusive boarding schools, and it was they who decided upon the children's careers. Andreas was to become a lawyer, and his sister had to finish teacher's college to earn a living as a governess in titled families.

There was much in Justine von Neel's character remindful of the tight-lipped patrician whose name she bore. She had an outspoken class consciousness and took great personal pride in bearing a titled name. It led her sometimes to haughty remarks, and she never quite succeeded in overlooking Amos Dallmann's middle-class origin. Her extreme family feeling was conveniently confined to her father's clan, and she was deaf and blind to anything that might remind her of her mother's Jewish ancestry.

Her brother Andreas was in every respect her antipode. He had the tall lean figure of the von Neels, their reddish hair and green eyes, but he was strong and muscular, with great health and energy. This powerful strength had revolted from early childhood against his mother's dolorous resignation and the restrictions imposed upon him by his relatives. His mind and body needed action, but all he got was punishment. It made him a fighter out of principle, callous to blame and social ostracism.

"Look who you are," he used to say to his sister. "A beggar, an alms receiver, living on the mercy of a handful of reactionary patricians who consider you a bastard and a disgrace. What will become of you? You say a governess; I call it a servant without the rights and enjoyments of the lowest kitchen maid."

Justine cried in helpless rage against his brutal frankness. She stuffed her ears with her fingers to close out the hateful truth, and she longed for the day on which they would part forever.

*

At the age of fourteen she was offered an opportunity to accompany the family of a diplomat to England as a companion for their ailing daughter. The afternoon before she was to leave, Amos Dallmann knocked at the door of her mother's apartment.

"I wanted to say good-bye to you," he stammered, breathless with embarrassment. "I made a little present for you, a souvenir, so that you would remember me."

He shoved a parcel into Justine's hand. It was a glove box made of birch-wood and lined with red satin. The lid was adorned with a Christmas tree, cut with a jig saw from thin veneer. The small branches, the candles with leaping flames, and a star at the tree-top were worked out like a pattern of lace. Amos watched the girl's face anxiously and his tension relaxed only when Justine clapped her hands in delight.

"I didn't know you could make things like that. Who taught you?"

"Nobody." Amos blushed. "I just do it after school!" And then he added with the modest pride of a master: "This is nothing compared to what I did in the park."

"What is it?"

"A bridge over the goldfish pond."

"A bridge? But not a real one for real people?"

"Yes, a real one. It holds two men. I've tried it out. I wish I could show it to you."

It had taken Amos a whole year to construct the small bridge which arched boldly over the puddle. The railing was artfully woven of elastic birch twigs, and the flooring was made up of two layers of round logs joined together by wooden pegs.

"But how did you bend the large branches?" marveled Justine, when they stood by the pond.

"I kept them under water tied with hemp strings. Every day I tied the string a bit tighter till I had the right arch. It hurt sometimes."

He showed her the scars on his fingers where the cords had cut into his flesh.

"Your hands look awful," cried Justine. "Do you want to become a carpenter?" And she turned her head away.

The boy blushed to the roots of his hair and hid his hands behind his back.

"No, no carpenter," he said slowly. "I wish I could become an artist — a painter."

She gave him a disappointed look.

"An artist, oh . . . I thought you'd become something useful. An officer for instance."

"I know." Amos looked into the dark water below his bridge. "I know I wouldn't have a chance as a painter. It's only a wish anyway."

Justine was moved by his ready resignation.

"Some painters have become famous, though," she said comfortingly. "Rembrandt, or Cranach, or Gainsborough. They were even allowed to paint kings and princes. Perhaps you will be one of them one day."

"No, not me. I couldn't be as good as they were." He looked at Justine with admiring eyes. "But I could learn enough to paint you one day. You, well Justine, I don't know how to say it, but you look different now."

Her fingers played over the silky bark of the rails, and then she looked up and their eyes met while their hearts throbbed.

"Oh dear," Justine cried, "I should have been back with mother long ago. I have to run now."

And as they had done six years ago on a rainy Christmas Eve they joined hands and ran back to the house.

*

Franz, the second of the Dallmann boys, had decided to become an officer in the fast growing navy of newly united Germany, though he knew that his training would cost more than the family budget could afford. Stubborn as all the Dallmanns, and with a robust self-confidence that recognized no obstacles, he stuck to his decision and eventually persuaded his mother to have Amos leave high school to save on his tuition. What Amos earned as a carpenter's assistant would help maintain the household, while Franz went through Naval Academy.

"You are the oldest one; you must share the responsibility," was Babette's only reply to Amos' timid protest that it was too early for him to give up formal education. "Books and learning do not make one happy anyway. You can see that from your father's fate."

She looked on unmoved while the boy went through the physical and mental ordeal of the following years. He never got used to the dazzling height of scaffolds, though scaffold-building was one of the main branches of his trade, and his heart weakened under the strain of hoisting beams. It was this vertigo that finally saved him. While a high wind blew over the town he had to fasten a loose rope at the top of a scaffold. By the time he had climbed up to the fifth floor the wind had blown off the gangway, and Amos saw in front of him the sheer precipice of a house wall. With an outcry he managed to grope his way to a window opening. As soon as he felt solid ground under his feet he became desperately sick, and it was in this desolate state that two of his fellow-workmen found him. They decided to give him a lesson that would cure his dizziness. They dragged him out of the window again and with a piece of rope tied him firmly to the upper end of the outside ladder. When they returned, Amos was dangling unconscious in the icy February wind. The boys got frightened and rushed him home, but the next day he was down with pneumonia.

It was only in moments of real emergency that Babette Dallmann recovered the spirit of her youth. For short periods she could become as devoted and unselfish as she had been in the smithy of Nerosov. When the doctor told her that Amos' ill-fed, exhausted body stood a very slim chance of pulling through, she realized that her main help and support were in danger, and she nursed her son with untiring diligence.

He eventually recovered, but was much too weak to go back to the carpenter's yard. By this time Franz had received his commission as an ensign, Jan was working as an apprentice to a sculptor, and Erwin, the youngest brother, had emigrated to America and was rarely heard from. With the responsibility for the support of his family eased, Amos could think about his own future for the first time in the nineteen years of his life, and he set about completing by home study the two years of schooling he lacked for admission to the Academy of Beaux Arts.

He saw himself a painter, recording the beauty of landscape and human face in the traditional manner, and secretly he dreamed of becoming famous enough to win Justine's approval for his profession.

He passed his theoretical examination for preferred military service, but was rejected at the recruiting office on account of poor health. It was a terrible blow. Germany was hypnotized by Bismarck's easy victories, and the race with British Imperialism. Only a man who could fight counted, and it was worse than a crime to be unable to bear arms. For Amos there was more involved in his rejection than a general verdict. He had carried Justine's picture in his heart as the final goal of a life he had pledged to the rehabilitation of his family honor. Now this guiding light had been extinguished. Justine would never marry a weakling.

He was walking down the street, aimlessly and hopelessly, when someone slapped him on the shoulder. It was Andreas von Neel, Justine's brother, who had been drafted the same day.

"Where are you going?"

"Nowhere," said Amos unpleasantly. Rumors that von Neel had been expelled from one school after another on account of revolutionary activities had kept Amos away from him.

"Just where I was going," said Andreas. "I have to find some stuff to rinse my mouth from all the bosh I had to swallow in the recruiting office. Come on, let's find a dive."

"Rejected?" asked Amos. "Why?" To him Andreas had always been the very model of strength and beaming health.

"Rejected?" Andreas stopped in the middle of the street. "They wouldn't reject me, oh no, not bloodhounds like them. They don't let you out of their claws unless you're insane or half dead."

"But they did not take me," said Amos. Andreas' mention of the insane and the half dead increased his bitterness.

"You are free?" shouted Andreas, "free, and not celebrating? There is the place I have been looking for." And he rushed down the steps of a wine cellar. Amos did not feel like celebrating, but he was afraid of his lonely room and of his mother's questions, and he followed.

"Why aren't you happy?" he finally asked, after watching von Neel stare gloomily into his glass. "I would give everything if only I could take your place in the army."

Andreas took a deep sip.

"You can have it. If only you could have it. Thanks for the honor of serving in this army and under this king! You know what he is?"

He leaned over the table, his large impressive eyes, the eyes of Ephraim Posener, firmly on Amos' face.

"A marionette, a rubber stamp in the hands of the Chancellor." He paused to emphasize his contempt. "And the Chancellor is the vampire of Germany if ever there was one."

Amos was horrified. "You can't talk like that, not in a public place. Bismarck is our leader, the man who has made our country great."

The corners of Andreas' mouth were turned down in an expression of boundless contempt.

"You talk like a newspaper headline, not like a thinking person. What is greatness, what does it mean? Does it mean eighty thousand men sacrificed in three wars that have served no other purpose than to satisfy one man's stupendous vanity, his pathological greed for personal power? Does it mean to revive all the old European animosities once blotted out by the common cause of defeating Napoleon? Does it mean to get land, thousands of square miles without strategic value and populated by hostile strangers, and to ruin for that our natural allies?"

"But what about the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine? You can't deny that that's worth something."

"Rich land, of course it is rich. But not rich enough to pay for a future war that will be fought by France to regain it. We have within our old borders plenty of coal, ore, and untilled farmland. Why doesn't the great Chancellor concentrate on developing our resources? I'll tell you why. It wouldn't be spectacular enough.

It would mean work, hard work, and the help of satisfied workers and farmers. He knows he can't handle them. He can't even handle a budget. Look at the financial mess the country is in. He can only handle soldiers because he can kick them with his bloody boots. That's why he plunges from one war into another."

Andreas ordered another bottle of wine and drank rapidly but Amos refused to join him. To hear the government abused was enough to make him feel panicky. He had made up his mind to pay and leave when Andreas von Neel looked up from his glass.

"But I'll show them," he said with bitter defiance. "I'll show him and this old fool Wilhelm whom he calls his 'great old master.' I have been forced into law studies. The fine, the pious, the generous von Neels forced me into it. They gave me a tool and I shall use it. I will free my people from this yoke; I'll kill the myth of the greatest bug-a-boo of our time!" He rose unsteadily and began singing:

"Arise, ye prisoners of starvation
Arise, ye wretched of the earth - - - -"

But he did not get farther. Two policemen turned up and commanded him to follow them to the police station.

"Me? Oh no, not me!" With one jump Andreas was on top of the table, trying to climb out of the window, which was above their heads. But one of the men caught his legs and brought him crashing down on the table with glasses and bottles shattering to the floor.

Amos had followed the scene with horror. Now he grabbed his hat and started to run. But the policeman got a tight hold on his arm.

"You stay here, son," he said. "And no nonsense. I have a gun here. You are coming with us. We need you as badly as your fine friend."

Andreas, slightly numbed by the fall and the wine, went without further protest. When they were locked in the huge old carriage which was to take them to police headquarters, Amos burst out:

"That's what you get for your rotten ideas. You idiot, thinking you can revolt against our state. You are mad, criminal, an anarchist! You have dragged me into this, you have ruined my life. I hate you, you and your dirty ideas!"

Andreas von Neel, sobered by this attack, gave Amos a long, long look, but he did not consider him worthy an answer.

After a short examination Amos was set free. Andreas himself exonerated him of any participation in his revolutionary utterances.

"Let him go, Your Honor, I beg of you," he said with comical pathos. "You would lose one of your best, your most faithful citizens if you locked him up. He has no part in my thoughts, God witness it. There is no red spot in his immaculately white soul."

Andreas von Neel was sentenced to three months in prison under the ill-famed anti-socialist legislation which gave the Chancellor full power to prosecute any person showing revolutionary tendencies in any part of the country. As a consequence of this verdict he was demoted to "soldier of secondary grade," which meant that he had to serve in the army three years instead of one. He spent this time mainly in the guard-house for spreading unrest and rebellion among the soldiers. When he finally was released he opened a law office in the worst slum district of Berlin and began to specialize in workers' cases.

Amos did not mention his meeting with Andreas to his mother, but two days later she flung a newspaper clipping on his desk. It stated that Amos Dallmann, son of a once ill-famed, notoriously lunatic father, had been arrested for making disparaging remarks against the government. "The apple usually falls near the tree," the paper had concluded. Amos convinced his mother that he had been an innocent victim of Andreas von Neel, but for weeks he did not dare to leave the house in daylight. The unforgotten horror of seeing fingers pointed at him nearly drove him to suicide. It was his mother who finally became alarmed.

She persuaded him to leave the city and to enroll in a technical college where he studied for an engineering degree. He made no friends there, being like his father and his grandfather in his inability to attach himself to others, but only in this respect did his university career remind one of Kuno Dallmann's. He did not join an underground movement, though again as in 1847 the time was rife with hidden rebellion. He led the sober, law-abiding life of a model student. The only highlights were hikes in the countryside. He always carried easel, paper and water colors on his back, and his love for nature made him a conscientious copyist of every detail. He became a good engineer, and finally won, together with his diploma, a scholarship to study iron construction in France.

In January, 1889, he arrived in Paris where his scholarship obliged him to take three courses at the Ecole Polytechnique. The preparations for the Grand Exposition Internationale which was to open in the summer, made it easy for him to find part-time work. Gustave Eiffel was building his "Tour de 300 mètres," and Cottançin constructed the Palais des Machines. It was in his office that Amos Dallmann became assistant calculator. Since the beginning of the century, French engineers had been leading in the field of iron construction. This exhibition would mark the climax of their efforts to accomplish an inseparable union of architect and engineer. But Amos Dallmann remained unmoved by the gigantic iron girders, arches, and columns. Their raw rationality offended his eyes, accustomed to ornamental stone walls. He was an engineer by default, convinced that his work was inferior to "pure art." The new French fanfare, raised by Anatole de Baudet, proclaiming the engineer as "l'homme moderne par excellence," was sheer blasphemy in his ears, and he lived blindly through this highly significant year of the Grand Exposition in which a new age celebrated its first triumph. When the day of the opening arrived and an enthusiastic crowd admired the new creations of steel, glass, and air, Amos felt lost. He took refuge in the Pavillon des Beaux Arts, and drowned his smarting homesickness by looking at the masterpieces of an art which was as far removed from the steel-hard world of functionality outside as he himself. And there he met Sophie Baer.

While he sat on a bench staring at a romantic landscape by Caspar David Friedrich, a young girl sat down beside him. It was late in the afternoon, and most of the visitors had left the exposition to seek fun and entertainment at the Trocadero. The two young people looked intensely at the picture, which showed a plain wooden cross on a rugged mountain peak, and then they looked at each other and smiled.

"C'est magnifique, n'est-ce pas?" said Amos, blushing about his boldness in starting a conversation in French.

"Yes, it's beautiful," said the girl and blushed too. She did not say it in French; she spoke in German and the familiar sound made Amos feel warm and excited.

"You speak excellently," he said. "Where did you learn German?"

"My people came from the Vosges Mountains; I was born there. I left when I was only two years old, after the war, you know. But my father always used to talk to me in his native dialect. He's dead now."

"You like pictures?"

"I adore them, I study painting at the Beaux Arts."

"Oh," said Amos, and he would have given much to be able to add, "and so do I."

"And what are you doing, Monsieur?"

Amos could not bring himself to admit in the presence of all these pictures and the young artist at his side that he was an assistant calculator. He was certain she would never speak another word to him if she knew the truth.

"I? I'm visiting," he said. "Just looking around."

It was closing time for the Pavilion. A guard went from room to room, ringing a brass bell, and turning down the gas lamps.

"You are alone here?" asked Amos when they stepped in the open.

"No, I came with my aunt. But she got tired. I left her at the Café. I must go back now."

"May I take you?" begged Amos, afraid of losing her so soon. "My name is Dallmann, Amos Dallmann!" He clicked his heels in the true fashion of his country. The girl laughed.

"One could see right away that you are no Frenchman. They never click their heels like that."

They walked across the square that separated the arts pavilion from the Palais des Machines.

"Look at that," cried Sophie, peeping into the interior of the huge hall. "To call a barn like that a palais! What insolence. And look at that tower. Three hundred meters high, all iron and nails. Isn't it awful?"

Amos' heart sank lower and lower. How could he admit that he was an accomplice of the men responsible for these atrocities?

"Let's go around the pond," he said, trying to stretch the precious minutes. "The flower beds are so lovely."

"I wish I could see you again." Amos heaved a convincing sigh. "It's wonderful to talk to you."

The girl gave him a quick glance out of her dark eyes which seemed to carry a constantly gay twinkle.

"Maybe you can," she said. "My classes at the Académie close at five. Perhaps we'll meet by chance."

Amos' admiration for women had been thoroughly platonic because he was shy, selfconscious and awkward but his isolation seemed to have no effect on him. With the firm determination which was the best part of his heritage, he had resolved to found his life on his love for Justine von Neel, and to make good for his lack of social and military qualifications by professional competence and a comfortable margin of financial security. He had not heard from her since he had left home under the depressing circumstances of his arrest. The mere possibility that she might doubt his innocence was enough to keep him from writing. A carefully guarded faith that eventually everything would turn out well was all he had to sustain his hope. But the past and all he had expected of the future were blotted out by Sophie. Stronger than the charm of her personality and her knowledge of his native tongue was their mutual devotion to the arts. It was this common interest that eclipsed Justine's picture.

Their romance never departed from the conventional pattern. Every afternoon he accompanied Sophie home from the Académie, carrying her portfolio and the little wooden box containing paints and brushes. When they reached the square behind La Bourse through which ran the narrow street where Sophie lived, she said:

"We'd better part here. The neighbors might gossip when they see us together."

Amos would bow and leave her with an entreating demand for another date. It was always granted, and finally Sophie announced with a happy smile on her dimpled face:

"I have arranged for next Sunday. Aunt Pierrine is away for three days, and my brother will be on duty. We can go into the Bois."

Amos' thriftiness had made him very careful with his scholarship money. Punctually he sent half of it to his mother, and had still saved up enough to buy a corsage for Sophie, to invite her for luncheon under the sweet smelling lime trees in Longchamps, and to hire a boat in the afternoon for a ride on the Pont de Passy. While they were gliding along under weeping willows, Sophie said:

"I wish you would tell me what your profession is. You can't be sightseeing all your life."

Amos' heart skipped a beat, but he knew there was no escape from the truth.

"I'm here on a scholarship at the Polytechnique." He left out the embarrassingly prosaic work at Cottançin's office, which he had given up the day after he met Sophie. "I'm an engineer. But," he added quickly, "I would much rather be a painter."

"Then why don't you become a painter?"

Yes, why didn't he become a painter? It seemed impossible for Amos to remember why he had given up his early ambitions.

"A painter does not earn much money," he said vaguely. "He doesn't play any part in society."

"But if he's happy and if he's a good painter, then these things don't matter." With a lily she had picked Sophie gently brushed the surface of the water.

"Really? I mean, do you really believe that?"

A dream, long forgotten, flared up, and flooded his heart with hope.

"Of course." Sophie looked encouragingly into his eyes. "Paris is full of painters. They are poor, but they are happy."

"Oh, Miss Sophie!" The lump in Amos' throat was too big.

"Did you ever paint?" asked the girl.

"I always paint," said Amos eagerly. "I wish you could see my work."

For a while Sophie thought so hard that a small vertical wrinkle appeared on her round forehead.

"I'll talk to Aunt Pierrine as soon as she is back. And if she agrees, you may come Thursday night to show us your pictures."

On Thursday night Amos hired a cab with an old bony horse. There was hardly any space for him to sit; floor and seat were piled with canvases and drawings. For the first time in his life he was going to show his work.

Aunt Pierrine was a big, garrulous woman. While Amos ran up and down the narrow stairs and piled his creations against the parlor wall, she sat on a rocker, knitting on a gray sock. She talked incessantly as her eyes followed Amos in and out of the door, and the rocker followed the rhythm of her chatter.

"Don't take it amiss, Monsieur. I'm an old woman and I can speak my mind." She rocked away self-assuredly. "But Sophie is a mere child, just nineteen, Jesus and Mary! a mere little kitten.—You should know that she's not a nobody." The rocker acquired an aggressive tempo. "Her people owned their land, yes, Monsieur, and the farm with it, and no debts either. It's too bad that my poor sister had to pass away so early — it's too bad."

She stopped for a second and so did the rocker in reverence to the dead.

"But it was too much, that's what it was, this awful war and all that. They killed her. She died of a broken heart, that's how homesick she was for the mountains. They were barbarians, if you don't mind my saying so, Monsieur." And the rocker went disgustedly back and forth, stopped on every forward move by a hard determined clap of her foot.

Sophie, who sat on the sofa and watched Amos' labors in bringing up his work, looked alarmed.

"Aunt Pierrine," she said in a low shocked voice. "Please, Aunt Pierrine, I told you where he comes from."

"But that's just what I mean," said Aunt Pierrine loudly. "That's exactly my point. He should know. After all, we are French, aren't we?" And she knitted vigorously, swinging the rocker wildly back and forth.

Amos' work was now in place, and it was not clear whether he had not followed the conversation or whether he just pretended not to have grasped the meaning of Aunt Pierrine's words.

"Of course, Madame, of course!" he said politely, and then with a deep breath, like an actor facing his audience: "If I may start now."

For an hour he displayed the whole treasure of his belief in art. He showed academic views of Notre Dame and Chartres, the verticals and horizontals neatly drawn with a ruler. There were diligent still life and animal studies, and finally, after he had exhausted his French subjects, he came to the framework barns, the Gothic cathedrals and the stone bridges of Germany. He loved bridges, and there were dozens of them in all sizes and techniques. Aunt Pierrine approved and rejected in an outspoken manner, but Sophie was all admiration and pride.

"You are a real painter," she said with her sweetest smile. "A real artist. You could enter the advanced class at the Beaux

Arts any minute. I know the professors would appreciate your talent."

Amos was boundlessly happy, and it was only Aunt Pierrine's noisy presence that prevented him from taking Sophie's hand and kissing it. He was showing portrait sketches when François, Sophie's brother, came home. He bowed stiffly to Amos, who was introduced as one of Sophie's classmates, and sat down beside his sister while Amos finished the demonstration. When the painter closed his portfolio, François Baer said with the rudeness of a patriot who wants to cover up a foreign name:

"What makes you think these clumsy faces have any attraction for us? We are not interested in your people. We had enough of them."

Amos blushed and looked in utter bewilderment at Sophie.

"François," she cried. "How can you say anything like that? Monsieur Dallmann is our guest and he is a great artist. Why can't you forget your politics for a moment?"

François got up from the sofa. "You'd better get out," he said threateningly to Amos. "Prussians are not wanted here."

He turned his back, his fingers drumming a nervous march on the window panes.

Sophie had tears in her eyes and her lips quivered, but Aunt Pierrine looked defiant and satisfied.

"Well, Monsieur, didn't I tell you? That's exactly how it is. François is right. Her parents," she pointed at Sophie, who was now crying bitterly, "lost all they had through your people. You can't blame us for not liking you. After all, we are French, aren't we?" she ended with the same sentence as before.

"But I love him!" cried Sophie, stamping her foot. "I don't care what you think. I love him!" And she threw her arms around Amos' neck in their first embrace.

The hostility of Sophie's family had stunned him. His natural inability to defend himself was aggravated by his struggle with a foreign language. But Sophie's passionate confession of a love he had not dared to expect gave wings to his words.

"Ma petite," he whispered in Sophie's ear, patting her shaking back. "Don't worry, ma petite, I don't care what they say. I'll become a painter, a great and famous painter, and I'll marry you. Just wait a little while, and we two will be happy."

François had opened the door to the hall. His face was white and his eyes fierce with hatred. "Allez-vous-en!" he shouted. "Allez-vous-en!"

He lifted a whole pile of Amos' work and threw it clattering down the stairs. There were four canvases left leaning against the wall. With one long leap Amos reached them and lifted them high above his head, kicking François in the shins.

"Don't you dare touch them," he shouted in his own language, "or I'll smash your head!" And like a gladiator his shield, he carried his work through the door which was slammed shut after him.

Without giving up his obligatory courses at the Polytechnique, Amos enrolled at the Académie des Beaux Arts. It was his only chance to see Sophie, who was now called for after classes either by her aunt or her brother. Her gay round face became pale and thin during these weeks but her love seemed to grow in proportion to the resistance at home.

"Let's flee to Germany," she proposed one day. "I can't stand it any longer. They are driving me crazy at home, and I never see you alone. The border is not far. We might be able to cross before François can reach us."

"We wouldn't be happy," he said sadly. "You aren't of age yet. They would indict me for eloping with a minor, and not me alone, but my whole people."

He had no other solution to offer. He loved Sophie, but the blunt and unjust attack of her family had paralyzed his ability to decide or to act. The day after this conversation Sophie did not come to class. Weeks passed and Amos waited in vain for her. He suffered from black forebodings, but he could not muster the courage to go to her house and face François or Aunt Pierrine.

After three weeks of anxiety and self-torture, he received a letter.

"Monsieur, I must talk to you and am expecting you tonight at seven o'clock at my office." The letter was signed François Baer, and the address mentioned was the office of a big nationalist newspaper.

François received Amos with an air of sullen resignation. "My sister has been ill," he said. "She has been very ill, and the doctor feared for her life. She seems bent on marrying you, though we have left nothing untried to dissuade her from this decision." He paused, glancing disparagingly at Amos as if to reassure himself of the insanity of his sister's love.

The news of Sophie's illness shocked Amos, and swept away cowardice and indecision.

"I must see her. How is she? Let me go to her now."

François' mouth curved scornfully.

"You'll have to withhold your passion till we have settled a few points," he said acidly. "You'll agree that my sister can't live in your country. She would perish in an atmosphere like that. And you must also agree that as an editor of this paper I can't have a German brother-in-law."

Amos wanted to protest. He didn't at all agree that Sophie would perish in his country, or that the name Dallmann was more of an indictment than Baer.

"May I ask an explanation ——" he began, but the man behind the desk lifted his hand impatiently.

"My time is very limited, Monsieur. We'd better come to the point without any useless discussion. I have decided, and my sister has agreed, that as a condition for your marriage you'll have to settle permanently, you understand, Monsieur, permanently in this country, and that you will have to undertake all necessary steps to become a French citizen as soon as possible, severing all connections with Germany." He got up. "Sophie and I are expecting you tomorrow afternoon at 4 o'clock to hear your decision."

Amos did not go home to the rooming-house on the Boulevard

Raspail where he had lived for ten months. He walked through the city which was to become his home for life. The mists of November came in long soft veils from the Seine and dimmed the brightness of thousands of gas lamps. Children were playing in the winding streets. Their games, which had been the games of his childhood, the rambling houses, the old trees behind crumbling garden walls, might have given him a message of the eternal similarity of human life, no matter on what soil its symbols stand. But Amos Dallmann did not hear it. The spires of Notre Dame reminded him that Sophie's religion was not his own faith. The girls in the Rue de Rivoli, pulling his sleeve and inviting him to the little hotels, brought back whispered tales of "Gallic lewdness." The wide-arched bridges over the river were not the bridges he had loved and painted; the Comédie was not the same theater in which he had experienced the first enchantments of dramatic art. From the smell of food, filtering through the doors of the bistros, to the skeleton of Gustave Eiffel's tower, everything spelled hostile strangeness. It did not matter to him that Notre Dame was built in the same Gothic style as the churches in which he had worshipped, that the river was bridged with the same material, the food cooked from the same ingredients, and the girls driven by the same motives. It was the atmosphere of home, registerable only through the senses, the intangible quality of the same climate, the same language and the same past as his fellow men, for which his heart cried out. To the end of his days there would be no human being, no plant, no stone connected with his youth. It would not count whether he had accomplished anything in the past, whether he had been honest or bad, brave or a coward. Nobody would understand why he was the man he was. There would be no leniency with his shortcomings, and no praise for his achievements. To justify his mere presence in a foreign country he would have to be better than the best native, whose right of existence had been established at his birth. Like a newborn child he would have to start life all over again, and that, Amos Dallmann felt, he could not do. Sophie's picture was ever present in his mind on this voyage through the future, but the ardent longing that had filled the first hours now had changed its subject. It became the raving desire to reassure himself of his place among his own people. His instinct told him that only the keenest minds and the bravest hearts can stand emigration without being rendered impotent for the rest of their lives, and he knew that he could not stand this supreme test.

Amos did not see Sophie again. At four o'clock the next day, the hour that had been fixed by François for the final decision, he sat in a train carrying him to the frontier.

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His mother still lived in the big old mansion and she was still searching for the dreamland of her adolescent fantasies. The large dining room now was divided into small compartments, walled by the huge oak wardrobes that had once served Kuno Dallmann's students. Each of these cells represented one of Babette's reveries. A lacquer table, bought from a junk dealer, and an arrangement of paper fans on the wall, served as a "Chinoiserie," where the hostess, clad in a kimono, served tea. A tablecloth draped around her body and held in place by a curtain cord, transformed her into a Greek hetaera, reclining on a sofa in a wardrobe-walled "Tusculum."

When Amos arrived unannounced from Paris, he found his mother's apartment deserted. Lead by the tender tones of distant music he groped his way through a jungle of cabinets massed against windows and doors of the former dining room till he heard voices from one of the enclosures. On a pile of hay squatted an elderly gentleman, in the badly worn outfit of a rococo cavalier, plucking the strings of a guitar. He smiled at Babette Dallmann and another matronly lady, stretched out on a piece of chintz. They had used flour to powder their hair; the white dust on their faces and deep decolletés gave their old skins the texture of damaged plaster masks. The property best indicating their occupation as shepherdesses was Goggl, the old blind dog of the Dallmann boys, who was equipped with an oversized blue bow and a jingly bell around his neck.

At the sight of Amos, the cavalier on the haystack stopped his music.

"How do you do, sir," he said awkwardly and started to climb down.

Babette remained on the floor, gazing open-mouthed at Amos.

"My boy ——" she said eventually, and for the first time in his life Amos heard emotion ring in her voice. She made a rather helpless attempt to get to her feet, and it took Amos' quick support to prevent her from tumbling into the hay pile.

"You have come home, Amos? For good?"

Amos nodded. His mother's ridiculous appearance made him speechless. But Babette did not seem to notice his embarrassment. As soon as her son had confirmed the permanence of his presence, she went right on with her play.

"Oh, that's wonderful, Amos, simply wonderful. You came at the right moment to help us out. Ganymede could not come. His real name of course is not Ganymede, but we call him that for this type of play," she confided with a cryptic smile. "We need another shepherd. Daphne has no partner." She pointed to the other lady, who had retreated into the farthest wardrobe corner, smiling sheepishly at Amos.

The silliness of the situation became too much for him.

"Look here, Mother."

"Don't call me mother," Babette pleaded coquettishly. "I am Phyllis today. Please."

Amos took a deep breath and attempted a new start.

"I meant to say — I mean — I'm tired from the trip and very hungry. Really, I couldn't play a shepherd now."

He left the room after a stiff bow to the rest of the company, hoping that his mother might follow him. But she did not. When he reached the entrance he heard again the tinkling of the guitar and the laughter of shepherd and shepherdess.

While he climbed another flight of stairs to the apartment of

Justine von Neel's mother, the man Amos felt as lonely and disappointed as the boy had felt many years ago.

Clara's appearance had changed. The black widow's veil which she had worn ever since her husband's death was neatly draped over snow white hair, and the black silk dress told of a fashion long passed. She was a very old woman although she was six years younger than Babette, the actress.

While he ate his first meal since he had returned, the contrast between the bourgeois atmosphere of this home and his mother's bewildering whims revived all his boyhood hopes. His love for Justine welled up violently, mixed with an ardent longing for normalcy and respectability.

"How is Miss Justine? Is she married?"

Clara von Neel gave the young man a thoughtful look.

"No, she isn't married, but she is very busy in her position. I haven't seen her for nearly two years."

"What is she doing?" Amos was only half interested; that she was still free was all that really mattered.

"She's with the grandchildren of the Chancellor."

"Oh ——" gasped Amos, "you mean to say ——"

"Yes, she's with Prince Bismarck's son. He's at the Foreign Office in Berlin, and Justine is responsible for the education of his children."

Amos smiled a sad smile.

"I am so happy for you and Miss Justine," he said, his voice choked by a feeling of irretrievable loss. "It is a wonderful recognition of her talents."

Clara acknowledged the compliment with a slight nod of her head.

"To be accepted in society was all she wanted." But there was no pride in Ephraim Posener's daughter as she said it, and her face looked tired, so tired that Amos felt even his silent presence was an intrusion.

The bridge over the goldfish pond was still there. For a long time he leaned against the railing that once had aroused Justine's admiration. The raw November wind blew dry leaves into the water, the trees were groaning in the storm, and Amos Dallmann parted with his love. He knew that he had lost Justine forever. Resignedly he accepted the crushing of his hopes as the inevitable fate of a nobody who has to remain outside the gates of aristocratic supremacy.

*

He got a job with the rapidly expanding state railway, and drowned himself in work to forget the loneliness of his life, senseless and bleak after the double loss of Sophie and Justine. In the spring of the following year he was sent to Berlin as a construction supervisor. One of the terminals had to be expanded to accommodate royalty and diplomats, invited to celebrate the Kaiser's birthday and to honor Otto von Bismarck, who had not set foot in the capital since his dismissal several years before. This visit was planned to mend the rift and to announce to the world that after some youthful lapses into liberalism Wilhelm, the second, had resolved to become Bismarck's heir.

Frantic masses filled the streets and thronged the plaza before the cathedral. The former chancellor, now nearly eighty years old, had attended church services with the Kaiser, and was greeted by deafening cheers when he walked back to his carriage. The crowd surged forward to see once more the face of the man who had unified their race under his fist; who had taught them that there is but one happiness: obedience, and but one goal: national supremacy. Amos was carried forward by the cheering multitude but he did not need to catch a glimpse of the stout figure in a fancy gold and white uniform, and of the Lohengrin helmet of the Kaiser. Without visible evidence he felt himself confirmed by his leaders in the mysterious union of common blood and common aim. Sophie's sweet picture, and Justine's proud face, veiled his eyes. The promise he had left unfulfilled in France, and the renunciation of his childhood love, merged into a personal sacrifice made by Amos Dallmann on the altar of the fatherland. He was again one with his people, returned to the great matrix from which all life sprang.

He was too deeply stirred by this fervent rededication to participate in the merriment of the city. He went home to be alone with his elation.

The boarding house seemed empty. Even the reception desk was deserted. As Amos took his key he heard his name called, and turning around he saw Justine von Neel sitting in the darkest corner of the hall. The contrast between the Justine of his patriotic trance and her physical appearance in the lowly atmosphere of this rooming house parlor was too much for him. He stood speechless, staring at her as if she were an apparition.

"I — I hope you don't mind my waiting for you," the girl said timidly. "Mother wrote me you were here. — I know you must be offended because I never wrote you. I am sorry, really I am!"

"You writing to me?" asked Amos, still stunned by the clash of reality with his patriotic trance. "I was never foolish enough to expect that. I know you have more important tasks now."

Justine turned around and buried her face in her hands.

"Let's get away." Amos had seen the cook peering through the door to the kitchen. "We can't talk here."

She nodded weakly, and did not resist when he put his arm around her shoulder and led her to his room.

"You must excuse me, Justine. I know this is no place to bring a young lady. It's chilly and all in a mess. But the restaurants are so crowded tonight." Hastily he tried to clear the divan of books and blue prints. "Won't you sit down?"

Justine stood at the door pressing her handkerchief against her mouth. This visit to a man's room in a boarding house was shocking. But Amos did not think of etiquette now. He only thought of her vexation. Gently he forced her to the couch and put a bright Spanish shawl around her shoulders. It was the only piece of luxury he had acquired in France, and he did not remember at this moment that it had been destined for Sophie.

"You look pretty in it," he said smilingly. "The gold tone matches your brown hair."

The unexpected personal note melted Justine's tenseness.

"They've taken my work away from me, the children I loved, and the ideals I have been living for," she burst out.

"Who?"

"The Princess Bismarck."

"But how can they let you go? You didn't give them any cause for dissatisfaction? I know you didn't."

"Here is the cause." Justine pulled a folded newspaper from her reticule and flung it on the table. "The Princess herself gave it to me."

It was the *Socialist Signal,* a leftist publication. An editorial "The Hero's Return" was marked with red pencil.

" . . . We wonder about the real motives behind this stupendous reception for a man who only five years ago was dismissed from his job without honors. If it is just another opportunity for the Kaiser to satisfy his pleasure in parades, new uniforms and self-adoration, we regret nothing but the taxpayers' money, spent on a childish show. If, however, this ovation means that the emperor regrets his decision to let Bismarck go, and wants to demonstrate his agreement with the Chancellor's political course, it will be the Kaiser who has something to regret. He will run into cliffs that will shatter his vessel.

"We, the Socialists, are no longer the powerless rabble Bismarck wanted us to remain. In spite of the shocking injustices done to us, we are today the second strongest party in the parliament, and we will become the strongest with the next elections. From two representatives in 1871 we have grown to forty-four. If Bismarck should be recalled to the leadership of the Reich we shall prevent it, and we shall not shrink from force."

"I wonder who would write such a stupid and vicious article," said Amos, folding the paper.

"It was written to ruin my life, I know it, just to drag me down."

"But Justine —" Her violence perplexed and embarrassed him. "What can a paper like this have to do with your work?" Justine's anguish had reached a climax.

"You don't know. If you knew you wouldn't even talk to me. Oh, I am so ashamed." She pressed the knuckles of her fist against her teeth. "My brother, he is — no, no, I can't tell you!"

"What is he? For God's sake, Justine, tell me."

"Andreas is editor of the *Socialist Signal!*" Justine nearly shouted it in Amos' face and with her nerves spent started to cry.

After a second of puzzled silence Amos Dallmann began to laugh, one of his rare good-natured laughs. He sat down on the couch, drawing the girl to him, and for the first time in this strange courtship he dared to take her hands.

"But Miss Justine, dear Miss Justine. That has nothing to do with you."

Party socialism had no deeper meaning for him. He had never met socialists in his profession, and his youth in the isolation of the old park had rarely been penetrated by politics. Active hatred of one party or another called for definite opinions, and definite opinions meant the hostility of those who did not share them. It was his general tendency to keep neutral relations with the world at large.

"You laugh?" said Justine, tears still running down her face. "Don't you know what it means to have a Socialist in the family?"

Her despondency gave Amos a sudden inspiration. He realized that of all the people in the world she had chosen him as her confidant. She trusted him — perhaps she even —

"I don't care what your brother is and what he thinks. I never liked him. I only care that you are wonderful, Justine, high, high above me. But I love you, Justine, I have loved you ever since I was a little boy."

He stopped, shaken to the core by his own boldness and pressing her hands with such force that she withdrew them with a little outcry.

"Amos! But Amos! I did not know, I had no idea," she whispered in feigned surprise. Her face had lost the contortions of fury and bitterness. It was gentle and helpless. And then she turned her head that he could not help kissing her cheek still salty from tears.

The din from the street had become so strong that it finally penetrated Amos' ringing ears. He stood up, his arms around her shoulders, and walked to the window. The wide square before the castle was filled with thousands of torch bearers, shouting impatiently for the appearance of the Iron Chancellor.

"How wonderful!" said Amos with a deep sigh. "A people's reverence for their greatest leader."

"And I knew him!" said Justine, her head resting on his shoulder.

The reflections of the thousand torches that lighted their faces as they kissed each other were strong enough to light their lives for the next twenty-five years.

IV. The Kaiser Spoke

The monument was so big and the child was so small. She stared at the stone masses, trying to understand what their curves meant. Her eyes climbed over a ridge of yellow sandstone resembling a giant's foot, up a towering column, and were checked by a bulging protuberance, some sixty feet above, that might be a knee.

"Is that a man, father?" asked Jarni, turning her tilted head at Amos Dallmann who held her left hand.

"No," said the father without looking at her. "That's no man. That's a hero." And he continued talking to the Lord Mayor of Leipzig.

Jarni stepped back as far as her father's arm would stretch and recognized now the outlines of a nude statue leaning on a stone sword that looked like a house wall. Tiptoeing around her father's back she nudged her brother. "Do you know what that is, Jasper?"

The boy risked a timid glance at the colossus. "No, I don't. Is it a man?"

Jarni shook her head with all the superiority of her new knowledge. "It's no man. Can't you see? It's a hero."

The boy tilted his head, and his eyes widened as he finally spotted the raw features of the stone ogre, staring with barbaric austerity toward the eastern border of the Reich.

"Jasper!" Jarni watched the petrified fascination in her brother's face and something in his expression frightened her. "Jasper," she called again under her breath.

The boy jerked his head as if someone had touched him.

"I saw his face," he whispered. "You didn't. You are too little. But I saw the hero's face."

The conversation between the Lord Mayor and Amos Dallmann drew to an end.

"So long then, old man," said the fat mayor, his moon face beaming with excitement and perspiration. "And hold yourself prepared for something special, yes, my friend, something extra special they have dug up for you." He chuckled and waved his fat forefinger gaily into Amos Dallmann's face. "That is to say if your cupola there holds and we don't find ourselves tonight facing eternity crushed to mince meat by your magnificent construction." He gave Amos a last benevolent slap on the shoulder and turned to another group of men on the platform.

Jarni looked up at her father who was trying unsuccessfully to chew the ends of his white mustache, a sign that his nervousness had reached a climax.

"What does he mean?" she asked. "What will you get?"

"Keep quiet," said the father. "Don't ask questions. There comes mother with the flowers and the key. Remember your curtsy and don't stammer. Do you understand?

A woman was making her way through the crowd on the platform. She was short and rather stout and wore a homemade gown of Wagnerian bulginess that emphasized the shortcomings of her figure. But in spite of gray hair her face looked young, flushed by an excitement that gave her rather blunt features a certain radiance. In her right hand she carried a beautiful bouquet of blue cornflowers held together by a black, white and red ribbon. Her other arm clutched a red velvet cushion and an oversized key, made of silver.

"Here, Jarni," she panted. "Remember your curtsy and don't stammer. Do you understand?"

The little girl grabbed the bouquet with both hands and buried her face in the cool, faintly scented flowers.

"Don't do that," said her father in irritation. "Don't smell those flowers. You know for whom they are meant. And don't forget your curtsy."

Jasper was desperately engaged in keeping the silver key on the slippery velvet his mother had handed to him.

"Don't forget your bow," she said, smacking the huge key angrily back on the cushion. "And don't stammer. Do you understand?" There was a commotion in the distance and far away cheers.

"Go now, Justine," said Amos Dallmann, jittery with nervousness. "HE is coming."

But Justine held her husband's sleeve.

"If HE should talk to you," she whispered in an intense voice, "you may mention that I once was presented to him by the Princess Bismarck. HE will not remember, of course. It was some twenty-five years ago. But the fact that I was governess to the Bismarck children — "

"But Justine," Amos interrupted, horrified by her suggestion. "How often must I tell you HE won't talk to me. And even if HE did I could not possibly mention anything as personal — "

"Do as you please," said Justine. "I know it would have been useful to mention your connections." And she walked away, her nose visibly turned up.

The special accent of this day had made Amos Dallmann sensitive to his wife's remark. With suppressed bitterness he felt that save for her, he might have been the artist to design this monument instead of being only the construction engineer. Words, never remembered in a life time, resounded faintly in his memory — "an artist? You want to become an artist? I thought you might become something important!" — spoken some thirty years ago by Justine von Neel, whom he had loved a trifle more than he had loved the arts.

Wistfully his eyes followed the outline of the monument. The crushing effect was terrific. It erased all feeling of individuality. There was nothing small, no detail that would absorb interest. Everything was so colossal in weight and proportion that the spectator had a feeling of complete annihilation. Amos Dallmann had forgotten about Justine and the disappointments of his own small life. For the first time in three years of toil and anxiety deep satisfaction grew in his heart. He knew that it did not matter which part he had contributed to the whole. With this tremendous structure he and his collaborators had solved the task given to them. They had found proportions huge enough to materialize the boundless patriotic pride of their nation.

The trumpets of twelve heralds in medieval costumes, and the air of the national anthem, drew Amos Dallmann from his trance. It was a din so loud that it penetrated every dream and made it plain to the whole of creation that HE was coming, HE, the Kaiser.

With every step the man in white garde-du-corps uniform took toward the platform, Amos Dallmann felt his elation and self-assurance melting away. His heart was beating violently against his ribs and his hands had forgotten his children. The unity with his work was gone. Here he stood before his judge who had come to pass sentence on his insufficiency. He did not see the familiar faces of the King of Saxony and the Lord Mayor behind the Kaiser. He only saw the threatening eyes of destiny approaching him without mercy. The tons of steel and stone he had handled ceased to be static. They hovered in precarious suspension, ready to crash down at the Kaiser's condemnation. So complete was Amos Dallmann's subjugation to the presence of his ruler that his body was covered with cold perspiration and his head was bowed in ready acceptance of the shattering verdict.

The wild cheering that had followed the singing of the national anthem died down to complete silence the moment the Kaiser reached the pulpit on the platform and raised his right hand in a short gesture of acknowledgment. His left hand, withered since birth, was hooked between his heavy gold belt and his coat in a seemingly natural and nonchalant gesture.

"My royal brother, my faithful subjects!"

The Kaiser spoke in a sharp clipped voice that had in it so much inflection of his native Berlin dialect as to make even the stilted formality of his address sound almost like slang.

"When the kingdom of Saxony and the good town of Leipzig approached Us with the request to lend Our presence to the dedication of a monument to the Battle of Nations, We felt, We must confess, slight doubts whether the occasion would warrant such a concession. Not doubting the excellent and truly patriotic intentions of the originators of the plan, We thought it improbable that anywhere outside Prussia could German art and German patriotism be expressed nearly as masterfully as in the monuments erected under Our supervision on the Avenue of Victors in Berlin, on the Niederwald and the Kyffhauser. Nevertheless We deigned to accept this invitation to express Our unfailing loyalty to Our united subjects, and to pay a special tribute to the land of Saxony that after much erring and wavering discovered a hundred years ago in the eleventh hour her German soul."

Here the Kaiser made a pause, glancing reproachfully at the king of Saxony who stood a few steps to the right of him. The monarch looked like a twin of the Lord Mayor. He was short and fat and his round red face was covered with fine blue veins. His eyes, which up till then had looked straight and admiringly at the speaker, started to blink and he coughed nervously as if he himself were his ancestor, who had dared to accept the royal crown from the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte. But the Kaiser seemed satisfied with the effect of his innuendo. With a jerk towards the monument that made the white plumes on his gold helmet sway he continued:

"But Our apprehension was unnecessary. This monument of the Battle of Nations is great, yes, I dare say it is a true creation of art, equalling the eternal masterpieces We have erected in Prussia. It proves that its creators have become spirit of Our spirit."

The tension had been too great, the relief was too overwhelming. Amos Dallmann felt his heart throb with joy and his energy was now concerned in keeping back the tears that welled up in his eyes.

"This monument," the Kaiser continued, "is not only a memorial to Our glorious past. It is proof of Our present strength and future greatness. Towering high above the country like the pyramids of Gizeh, indestructible by time or attack, it will still be here when We are gone and Our children's children rule the earth. Its stone figures will then speak of Us, of the men who decided to make their country the center of the world, and their people the masters on land and sea. Masters and helpers who built this monument to the Battle of Nations, We thank you!"

The band struck up the Netherlandish Prayer and thousands of voices joined in:

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing
He chastens and hastens His will to make known,
The wicked oppressing cease them from distressing
Sing praises to His name, He forgets not his own.

There was a moment of dead silence. With a supercilious expression the Kaiser stared over the heads of the crowd, and Jarni Dallmann stared into the face of the Lord Mayor who was to give her and Jasper the signal for their act. But the good fat mayor was all broken up. He held an enormous white handkerchief in front of his face to hide his emotion and blew his nose incessantly. Another second passed. Jarni looked up at her father. The pallor of his face blended with the white of his side burns and his beard. He did not bite his mustache any more but his sensitive draftsman's hands turned his top hat in a nervous spin. For a moment Jarni's eight-year old heart stopped beating as the great decision shaped in her mind.

"Come," she hissed at Jasper, and with the start of a sprinter she bounced forward toward the motionless figure beside the pulpit. Whether she really said: "To Your Imperial Majesty from the builders of this monument in respectful devotion," as she had practiced for three months she did not know, nor was she conscious of the curtsy that had been mentioned so often before. Her mind was concerned with a faint sobbing in her back, and in a flash she knew: "Jasper! Oh God, that's Jasper. What's wrong with him now?" She turned swiftly around and there stood Jasper, his lower lip quivering suspiciously, staring at the silver key that was slipping fast and viciously from the velvet cushion.

It had hardly hit the ground when Jarni snatched it, and holding it up to the Kaiser, said in her best parlor voice: "And here is the key, your majesty. It is for the main door of the monument. Don't lose it, please. It's real silver and they don't have another one."

The Kaiser looked at her from small cold eyes but his mouth curved in the suggestion of an amused smile that raised the tips of his world-famous mustache. An adjutant took the key and the bouquet, and Jarni took Jasper's hand and ran. She had taken a quick glance at her father's face and she had seen something she dreaded more than anything else on earth, more even than the Kaiser: two blue veins swelling on his left and right temple.

His boy had dropped the key and Amos Dallmann felt ashamed of it, but somehow it had seemed inevitable from the very beginning. Underneath his reconquered facade of pride and affirmation he shared Jasper's inability to keep head and hands steady in HIS presence. It was too much, not only for a child. What horrified him was the faint smile on the Kaiser's face, that had been known for twenty-five years to be shuttered in public life by impenetrable seriousness. To see HIM smile was worse than to see HIS wrath. And the cause had been his daughter, his youngest child! Never before had Amos noticed the tart quick accent in her speech that differed greatly from the soft dragging sounds of the local dialect, and never had he dreamed of seeing a look so unabashed in a child's eyes as when she handed the Kaiser the key. There was in him the trembling fear of a blasphemer, and as a devout worshipper would vow to sacrifice a candle for atonement, he promised his ruler that something drastic would be done as long as there was still hope for improvement. His plan for severe physical punishment came as a great relief to Amos Dallmann. It obliterated the annihilating fear he had suffered during the Kaiser's speech and made him a man again. He indulged in it till the roll call drew him back into a ceremony in which he played only the smallest part.

One after another the men on the platform stepped in front of the Kaiser and were introduced to him by the king of Saxony, who read from a sheet of paper their names and the part they had taken in the execution of the monument. Silently the Kaiser took a medal from a red leather box, held by his adjutant, and pinned it to the lapel of the applicant, who doubled up in a bow that made the tips of his coat stick out like a goose tail. Watching the procedure Amos Dallmann remembered the Mayor's allusions to a special surprise and with relief he felt that it had all been a joke. He would get a medal like all the others and he would not have to face a situation for which he was not prepared.

He had just come up from a kowtow so deep that it had sent him nearly into a nose dive when the king looked up from his list and said:

"And this, Your Majesty, is Chief-Engineer Dallmann. I have great pleasure in presenting him to Your Majesty because it was his grandfather Sebastian, who as a drummer boy of fourteen led our troups over to the allied armies during the Battle of Nations. He has carried on the glorious tradition of his ancestor by erecting the steel structure for this monument."

"Very interesting indeed," said the Kaiser, looking without any interest at Amos. "We are pleased to see you, Chief-Engineer, and We are especially pleased to hear of the decisive part your family has played in the nation's history." Amos stood petrified, struck as by lightning by this unexpected acclamation.

"We have decided," the king of Saxony said, "to erect a monument for Sebastian Dallmann in Olmsfeld from where he hailed. We would like to honor the Chief-Engineer by commissioning him with a design for this monument, and we do hope Your Majesty will graciously consent to accept the sponsorship of the committee to raise the necessary funds."

The broad Saxon dialect of the king had somewhat eased Amos' tension. But when the Kaiser addressed him again in HIS clipped Berlin accent he felt as awed and helpless as every Saxon had always felt before these sounds.

"Of course," said the Kaiser. "I shall be glad to consider support of such a plan. You are an artist, Mr. Dallmann?"

"Not directly, your Majesty," said Amos and the shameful confession nearly choked his voice. "But I have painted and sculptured in my spare time."

"A dilettante then — " said His Majesty with a smile that hurt. But as before in his attack on Saxony's shady political past, he countered his own offensive as soon as he saw it had had the desired effect. With a sigh of dreamy longing he continued:

"Yes — to be an artist, to devote one's life to the creation of beauty — We have Ourselves worked in architecture and painting, and not without talent as We were told."

The good king of Saxony, one step behind his imperial brother, grinned in unconcealed irony at the Kaiser's words.

"Everyone knows of Your Majesty's outstanding artistic gifts," stammered Amos, giving his own monarch a reproachful look.

"We shall consider Our sponsorship for the committee with benevolence as soon as your design for the monument has been submitted." The Kaiser concluded the conversation and turned abruptly towards the next aspirant for the Order of the Red Eagle.

Amos Dallmann withdrew, walking backward in a slightly stooped position till his back bumped into the railing of the platform. Then he turned around and hurried down the steps in a haste that resembled a flight.

He had crossed half of the celebration ground before he realized that there was no longer milling and shouting around him. Looking up he saw a wide empty alley, lined on both sides by silent staring faces. Blood rushed with painful pressure to his heart and like a man on top of a spire he felt the dizziness of empty space fall upon him. He went faster, hoping that the crowd might close in again but like a stage curtain drawn by invisible strings, the people separated at his approach. He started to search frantically for a familiar face to stop the sinking feeling, and discovered with relief

Mrs. Heber, the mother of his assistant.

"Hello, Mrs. Heber," said Amos lifting his top hat. But Anna Heber could not be fooled. She blushed and bent her old knees in a deep curtsy. It was this curtsy of an old woman that gave Amos Dallmann a full understanding of the situation. All these people had watched the dedication and they had lined up to acknowledge that he was no longer anonymous like them. He was the man to whom the Kaiser had spoken. The empty space around him did not frighten him any more. It carried him aloft in glorious flight. The staring faces to his right and left ceased to belong to individual persons. They were the united face of his people waiting expectantly to see him perform a miracle by matching the artistic genius of his ruler.

For a second he was conscious of his wife and children standing somewhere along the road. But he passed them without so much as a smile, his fast stride carrying him toward immortality.

The old mansion that once had been Kuno Dallmann's famous school still showed signs of a great past. In a wide sweep the graveled driveway led from a wrought iron gate to the broad entrance steps. The wings of the heavy oak door were adorned with the carved insignia of an extinct family of counts, and in the stained glass windows of the entrance hall were coats of arms of all related families back to the sixteenth century. But after that the dilapidation became evident. The banisters of the stairs had been crudely repaired with unfinished pine boards, and the hand rail was worn dark, stained by innumerable hands, and by the greasy boots of college boys who had used it as a slide more than forty years ago.

It was the day of Jarni's ninth birthday, and she had been invited by her grandmother for a special treat. Down the dimly lit gangway between the wardrobe cells she was ordered into the "Gypsy Den." The floor of the cubicle was littered with the accessories of a robber's life, ball and chains, a cutlass in a mouldy leather case, and an outsized archery set that would have made Robin Hood shudder. A kettle full of glowing charcoal hung on a tripod, filling the room with an acrid smell, and on the walls hung prints of eighteenth century gypsy scenes which Jarni loved for their unconcealed amorousness.

Babette Dallmann had given up wearing the costumes of her respective abodes, but in spite of her eighty years she did not look like an old woman. Her straight black hair showed only faint signs of white. Her skin still fitted tightly over her Slavic cheekbones, and her jet black eyes sparkled in an inquisitive and hostile glow. There was not an ounce of fat on her frame, which would have seemed repulsively haggard had it not been for her short stature — little over five feet. Babette had never been young and she was spared the hideous contrast of growing old.

"I wanted to take you to an outdoor concert." She removed a frying pan from the charcoal and served hot potato salad and sharply spiced sausages. Jarni sat on a moth-eaten bear skin, feasting on a meal her mother would have abhorred as being vulgar and without nutritional value.

"They called the concert off though," said the grandmother, getting up from the pelt and picking hair and ashes from her black silk skirt. "Bad weather or something."

Jarni looked out of the curtainless window. The sun was setting in a cloudless sky.

"Bad weather?" she repeated uncomprehendingly. "You did not really mean to take me to an outdoor concert, did you?"

"Of course." Babette shot disapproving glances at her stupid grandchild. "What else did you think."

She was standing in front of a splintered looking glass tying the ribbons of her black widow bonnet under her chin. "Didn't you see the ticket I sent you as a birthday present?"

"Yes, of course," said Jarni intimidated. "But it was an old one from last year. And I thought we would . . . ."

"Papperlappapp," interrupted Babette, impatient with her grandchild's slow understanding of the game that was on. "There should have been a concert in the yard of the Castle, a beautiful concert with Mozart, Wagner, Schubert and all that. But they called it off. So I have to take you somewhere else since this is your birthday and you deserve a surprise. Understand?"

And finally Jarni understood that to uphold this farce even while they were alone was an important act of face-saving without which grandmother could not possibly take her to the movies.

Despised as immoral and of low artistic taste by all respectable citizens, the nickel shows of 1913 led a dark existence in side streets and back yards. It was unthinkable for people like the Dallmanns to visit such vulgar entertainment or to have their children's minds poisoned by it. But old Babette Dallmann had no artistic prejudices. She had discovered that films were the ideal food for her incessant hunger for romantic unreality. She had been an ardent admirer of the dramatic arts as practised by the strictly conservative Royal Playhouse. But her enthusiasm had induced her to interfere constantly with the actors on the stage. From her subscription seat in the second row she had voiced her criticism as well as her approval unchecked by the hisses and hushes of other spectators. One day during the fateful letter scene in "Cabal and Love" she had accused the actress playing Louise of having "as much feeling as a chair." That had been too much. She had been expelled from the house and by way of recompense had discovered the brand new performances of small cinemas.

Her instinct told her that of all her family only Jarni would be able to understand her delight in the art of Max Linder, Waldemar Psylander and Mia May. Jarni could keep a secret, not only because of her constant opposition to her parents, but because she had no close friends like other children. Her isolation made her wide open to the world of make-believe in which her grandmother lived.

That night of her ninth birthday they saw a gruesome adventure of a blond girl, kidnapped by a fakir for the harem of an Indian Maharaja. It could have been very exciting, but Jarni had difficulty keeping her mind on the picture. Only two weeks had passed since the dedication of the monument and the impressions of that day still echoed in her mind. During one of the long intervals, while the film rolls were being changed, Jarni said:

"Did father tell you about Leipzig?"

"Of course he didn't," said Babette in an offended voice. "He never tells me anything. If it were not for the papers I would not even know he had been there." The truth was that Amos Dallmann had given up talking to his mother about his work because he was defenseless against her venomous remarks. "How was it anyway?"

"Father was mad at me," said Jarni in an attempt to unburden her mind. But when grandmother asked why, she did not answer directly. It seemed impossible that any adult—even grandmother — could understand why she had talked to the Kaiser.

"Oh — I don't know," she said wincing. "It's over now and I had a nice birthday today. I got all the things I had asked for. I guess father has forgotten because he's too happy about the new monument."

"What new monument? Still another one for those Prussian heroes?"

"Oh no! Didn't you read about it? It's for our great-grandfather. For Sebastian Dallmann."

Babette looked at Jarni as if she had just discovered that her grandchild was seriously ill.

"Now, child, pull yourself together," she said encouragingly. "Straighten out your mind. For whom is this monument?"

"But I told you, I told you this very second. It's for a man called Sebastian Dallmann, and Freya says he's our great-grandfather."

"And who wants to build a monument for your great-grandfather, my angel?" Babette's tone was forcibly calm as if she were talking to a lunatic.

"HE himself. The Kaiser."

Babette Dallmann gave her grandchild one more glance to make sure that Jarni was not making fun of her and then she started to laugh. She held her handkerchief before her mouth and her whole slight frame shook.

"A monument for Sebastian Dallmann," she gasped. "God and all Saints! For Sebastian Dallmann, and built by the German Kaiser." She went on laughing till she had to cough and the cinema went dark.

"Why did you laugh?" asked Jarni as they were walking towards the bridge over the river. "What's so funny about Sebastian Dallmann?"

Grandmother did not laugh any longer. In the flickering light of the gas lamps Jarni saw that her face was stern, with two sharp lines of contempt around her mouth.

"There's nothing funny about him," the old woman said, looking straight ahead. "Never mind my laughing. You are too young to understand the situation. Let them build a monument for him. Serves them right. All men belong together — the fools!"

Jarni would have forgotten the incident if she had not been sent one day with a box luncheon to her father's studio. She liked the two large rooms with high north windows and sky lights, and with models of bridges and terminals on shelves all around the walls. They were made from cardboard or clay, but they looked so lifelike with coats of gray paint and little trees made from green sponge to give the scale. Mr. Heber, the assistant, gave Jarni a friendly slap on the cheek and sent her into her father's office.

Amos Dallmann greeted her benevolently but absentmindedly.

"Put the box right there on the stool," he said, and went on coloring a large sketch on the drawing board in front of him. The child obeyed and then stood for a while watching her father work. On the paper was a beautifully rendered structure looking like an artfully imitated rock. A boy in a ragged uniform stood on top; his hair flowing in an imaginary wind, his hands clutching a pole with a torn flag. His head was turned back over his shoulder and his mouth was open as in an outcry.

"Like it?" said the father looking up at the child.

"It's beautiful."

Amos Dallmann smiled. There was no limit to the praise he could stand, and Jarni's fascinated face pleased him.

"See here," he explained, beckoning her in front of the drafting table. "There will be a relief around the base of the rock, showing the different regiments that surrendered during the Battle of Nations. And right here under his foot will be an inscription: 'The hero of Olmsfeld: Sebastian Dallmann.' Nothing else, just this one line."

He looked smilingly at the picture, visioning it on top of the Ore Mountains as a lasting monument for his family.

Jarni was torn between admiration for her father's work and fear, or rather a kind of pity, for his satisfaction. She remembered her grandmother's laughter and the malicious relish in her voice as she had said: "Serves them right — the fools!" It was like a warning that it was her responsibility to protect her father's reputation.

"Grandmother laughed so strangely when I told her about the monument. She seemed to think it was a foolish idea."

Amos Dallmann gave her a shocked look. He turned pale and his lower teeth started to catch his mustache.

"What did she think was foolish about it?" he said nervously. "Speak up."

His voice sounded harsh with fear, and Jarni regretted having said anything at all. But there was no refusing answers that had been commanded.

"She didn't say much. She just laughed, and she said — she said it serves you right. That was all."

Amos Dallmann stared down at the sketch, and the two blue veins at his temples started to swell.

"I have to go now," whispered Jarni, and without waiting for permission to leave, she raced through Mr. Heber's office and out of the door.

That night Amos Dallmann had a long talk with his mother from which he returned crushed and humiliated, ready to bury his last dream. The monument for Sebastian, the hero of Olmsfeld, who had been an atheist, a rebel, a drunkard, and a self-murderer, was never built, and the plans and sketches were silently burned. Amos Dallmann's shoulders, which had been straight and proud for the short moment of recognition, stooped again in humble acceptance of his fate. But in his wife, Justine, the crushing consequences of the old woman's tale aroused a new determination to erase the family's past, and to secure her children's future by fanatic devotion to the ideals of their country.

V. The Haloed Death

The first day of August 1914 was as soft and golden as — so history reports — the fourteenth of July 1789 when with the Bastille the French people destroyed Feudalism. And it was as full of the contentment of animal life, returning to the protective warmth of burrows and thickets, as the thirty-first of October 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses of reformation to the door of the Cathedral in Wittenberg, liquidating the Middle Ages with a thunder-clap that shook Germany. The latest cataclysm of death, that was to last for more than thirty years, started when the Baltic Sea was calm and the dark pine forests on the high dunes were buzzing with the life of beast and plant. Little waves, just vivid enough to add an accent of motion to the vastness of the water, played back and forth on the white beaches, and fishermen in old reliable vessels were calmly dragging their nets as hundreds of generations had done before them.

Jarni and Jasper had grown tired of standing in front of the postoffice in the little resort town, waiting for bulletins to be published. They had gone back to the beach and were putting finishing touches to their sand castle.

"What shall we call it?" asked Jarni. Her brother had planted a black, white and red flag on top of the mound and was now looking back at the village, peacefully spread out on the cliff.

" 'Lookout' would be a good name, or, let's call it 'Siegburg'."

"Why?" asked Jarni. "You think there will be war?"

"Of course. What do you think? Didn't you hear mother talk about England's insolence?"

It sounded ridiculous, but both children were so accustomed to the catchwords of the day that they were unaware of their boisterous emptiness. Pressing pink and white shells into the moist sand to form the new name "Siegburg," they had come to the letter "b" when a boy and a girl came over from another beach chair.

"Let's ignore them," whispered Jasper. "Turn your back so that they can't see your face." They went on with their work peeping now and then over their shoulders to see whether the other children were still there.

"That's a beautiful castle," said the boy. He was tall and slender and his skin had a deep olive tone. "We watched you build it. I wish we could see the inside."

Jarni turned around, ready to say "Why don't you come in?" when Jasper caught her arm.

"Don't talk to them," he hissed. "You know who they are. Mother doesn't want us to talk to Jews."

He had been loud enough for the other children to understand but the boy did not challenge Jasper, who was half his size. He only gave him a fierce look, took his sister's hand and ran back to his own beach chair. Jarni was embarrassed. She felt the offensiveness of their behavior and she would have loved to show the castle of which she was so proud. But to talk to Jews was as unthinkable as to talk to gypsies or to the Poles who came over the border in the fall to work as harvest hands. She went back to work and had soon forgotten about the incident.

It was not yet noon when the oldest Dallmann daughter came down to the beach to call the children home. Her beautiful blond hair was held back by a large blue bow, from her arm dangled a sailor hat with a blue ribbon, and she wore a white sailor blouse and a pleated navy blue skirt. Freya Dallmann was a pretty girl, the typical German "Backfisch."

"You have to hurry," she said, collecting shovels, pails and pillows. "We'll take a train right after lunch and you have to get washed and dressed."

"But why?" asked Jarni. "Mother said we would have another week here."

"That's all changed now. The Kaiser has declared war on England. Tomorrow is the first day of mobilization and then all trains will be needed for soldiers. We have to leave today to get home." She ran towards the cliff and Jasper and Jarni ran after her without having time for a last look at their beautiful castle "Siegburg."

The table d'hôte of the *Pension Seemoewe* was already crowded when the Dallmanns sat down for lunch. Everybody was talking about the war and how best to get home. Justine was so excited, she could hardly eat, and to Jarni's great delight spilled soup on the table cloth.

"It's war, finally," she exclaimed as if she were saying "It's spring, thank God!" and she gave Jasper a kiss on the cheek that made the boy squirm. "One day you'll be a hero," she promised. "A German hero like the others."

"Where is Marjorie?" Jarni looked at the three empty chairs opposite their own seats.

"Hush, you!" Freya, fifteen years old and fully conscious of the situation, poked her little sister in the ribs. "Don't mention them. They were English."

"But I liked Marjorie," complained Jarni. "Mother said too she was nice. Didn't you, mother?"

Justine blushed as if she had been caught lying.

"The Harcourts have left and you better forget about them."

"But you said Jasper could learn how to become a gentleman from Mr. Harcourt."

"Will you please stop talking. The Harcourts are our enemies and they will soon know what that means." And Justine attacked her meat as if she were butchering the Harcourt family.

It was the proprietor of the boarding house who broke the uncomfortable silence.

"With your permission," he said in an apologetic voice. "We had to close the veranda because Fritz and Alwin, the waiters, were called to the colors this morning. If you wouldn't mind, I thought we might offer these three chairs —— "

He made a vague gesture toward the rear and there stood Mrs. Fleischmann and her two children, the boy and girl who had wanted to see Jasper's castle in the morning. With stony faces they looked at the comfortably seated guests. They had been in the boarding house as long as the Dallmanns but they never mixed with the group at the table d'hôte. Transient guests and "people like the Fleischmanns" ate in the glassed veranda beside the entrance. This arrangement had only half satisfied Justine and she had mentioned to Freya that next year she would be more careful in the choice of their summer resort. Now Freya looked expectantly at her mother to see her put those Jews in their proper place. But to her speechless surprise Justine's voice was oozing sweetness when she said:

"We don't mind. Of course not. Please, sit down. We are all Germans now, aren't we?"

After a ride in an overcrowded coach the Dallmanns reached Berlin, and for the first time Freya, Jasper and Jarni saw the magic name over the entrance to the terminal. Berlin was more than a capital. It was the center of a "Weltanschauung," and for those adhering to it, it was the hub of the world. Justine's way home was not via Berlin, but she had been so frantic to leave the isolation of the resort and to witness what she called "the turning point of world history" that she had taken the first train available. She stood now with her children on the platform where they had alighted and waved to a military transport ready to leave for the French border. Engine and coal car were decked with flowers and flags; and flowers were stuck in the barrels of the soldier's rifles, in their belts and in the trimming of their caps. A band of elderly civilians in gaudy clothes played one patriotic tune after another, joined by a wall of women, old and young, crying and laughing, with children in their arms, in baby carriages, and standing beside them. There were chalk drawings on every car: the French cock being clawed by the Teutonic lion; Marianne, another symbol of France, dancing with a skeleton; John Bull seeing his money bags torpedoed by a German undersea boat. When the noise had reached a climax, a whistle blew shrill and wailing. Two stationmasters in red caps pushed the crowd away from the coaches, and the train started to move. The band played *Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles* — and those who were not yet hoarse from cheering, joined in. Justine and her children stood close to the engine and while the train passed them Justine sang. The beauty of her voice drowned out the tangled chorus while tears welled up in her eyes. It was as if these tears gave her a brilliance of tone she had never had before.

For a long time Justine stared after the vanishing train. When she and the children finally turned around, the platform was empty save for a small black bundle that lay close to the tracks. They reached it as the two stationmasters lifted the slumped form to a luggage trolley. It was an old woman, her eyes closed and her face petrified by an indescribable sadness.

"Let's hope she has some identification on her," said one of the men. "Otherwise it's a lot of trouble." And he threw a worn handbag after the rolling trolley.

Justine passed the scene with fast, angry steps, her glance fixed on the distant exit of the terminal, and her forehead wrinkled by a frown of disapproval that anyone had dared to disturb her patriotic exultation.

"Why do you cry?" She finally had to turn to Jarni, who was trotting behind, crying uncontrollably.

"The old woman, is she really dead?"

"I don't know," said Justine, "but if she is, don't cry. She died at a great moment."

They were sitting at one of the small tables in front of the Cafe Kranzler, Unter-den-Linden. It was late in the afternoon and stores and offices had added their employees to the host celebrating the start of the first World War. Newsboys were selling extras which appeared every few minutes with new headlines. Justine had quieted down sufficiently to enjoy a cup of coffee and to watch with delight the milling crowd. The children were having hot chocolate with whipped cream and huge slices of Streusselkuchen filled with yellow custard and were dead to world history. A treat like that was so rare in their puritan upbringing that every bite of it had to be enjoyed with utmost concentration.

"It was a day like this," said the mother, leaning back in her chair and inhaling the sweet scent of the linden blossoms, "the day when the old chancellor and the young Kaiser drove together down the Linden to celebrate the Kaiser's birthday."

"Were you invited?" asked Jarni.

"Of course not. I — " she made a pause to find proper words which would hide the truth. "I had already left my position with the Chancellor's grandchildren."

"Why?"

"Well, you see, they were old enough no longer to need a governess. They were very good children. Always well behaved and polite."

Jarni had heard that so often that she hated those children for no other reason than their annoying function as a shining example.

"They were plain dumb," she whispered into her brother's ear, fully aware that her mother would hear the remark.

"Jarni!" cried Justine. "How can you say anything so rude and untrue. Give your Streusselkuchen to Jasper; you won't get anything. And you will not see the torch parade tonight."

Sullenly Jarni pushed her cake over to her brother and started to gulp down her chocolate without taking time to breathe. She wanted to make sure that she and nobody else got it.

"That reminds me of the torch parade twenty years ago," continued Justine as if nothing had happened. She was so used to incidents with Jarni, and Jarni was so used to being punished for them, that neither showed lasting concern. Jarni took her chances — her parents took countermeasures. That was all there was to it.

"Your father and I were looking out of the window of the Hotel Darmstädter Hof down there."

Justine pointed eastward toward the imperial castle but she did not continue her story. A newsboy was shouting the headline of the latest extra into the patrons' ears: *"Social-Democrats Vote Unanimously for War Credits!"*

Justine bought a paper and read with a solemn voice:

"It has been announced that the Social-Democratic party has come to a unanimous decision to vote for the war budget in tomorrow's session of the Reichstag. The vote will be preceded by an explicit declaration in which the devotion to peace, as always shown by the party, will be emphasized. The Social-Democrats hold that the Russian Czar can no longer be tolerated as a political judge of Europe, and they are ready to the last man to defend their country, their culture, and their humanitarian aims. If it comes to war, all party distinctions cease and there are only Germans."

Justine folded the paper with hands trembling from emotion.

" — No parties, only Germans," she repeated, looking up to the blue sky where the silvery shape of the Parseval balloon glided noiselessly above the linden trees.

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The girl in the millinery shop looked surprised.

"A black veil? One moment please."

She searched in boxes till she had found an article so little in demand in midsummer. Justine fingered the heavy net and then held it up against the light to see how dense it was.

"We have the same quality in navy blue," said the girl. "It would go better with your light suit." She reached for a roll of blue veiling. "It's heavy." She held it up before Justine's eyes. "It will hide your face perfectly." And then she added with a tone of hypocritical reassurance: "We sell it a lot to ladies who don't want to be recognized."

Justine gave her a quick glance and seeing a faint smile of malice around the girl's mouth said in a voice sharp as a knife:

"I'll take two yards, and wrap it carefully. It's for a present."

But the look of the old attendant in the comfort station was even more insolent than that of the clerk. She watched Justine draping the veil around her hat.

"Pretty good — pretty good," she snickered. "He won't know whether he kisses his own mother."

The implication behind her laughter drove Justine frantic. In what a world of immorality these proletarians lived!

"You are mistaken," she hissed. "I'm a lady and a mother." But she only earned a broad and unbelieving grin. She ran up the stairs and called a cab. The driver seemed to have no interest in her appearance and she could collect her thoughts and make her plans on the long ride to the disreputable northern district of the city.

The "Advance," the official newspaper of the Social Democrats, had issued its third extra edition that day and everybody was much too busy to pay any attention to the strange figure in the reception room. After half an hour of waiting Justine finally stepped into the hall and got hold of a boy who was balancing a bundle of papers on his head.

"Where can I find Doctor von Neel's office?"

"Second floor."

Justine climbed steps worn hollow by incessant use and found herself in a long dark corridor on which fell a dim light from a glass door at the far end. Shouting voices from the loading ramp and the shops mixed with the roaring of the printing machines. A thick smell of machine oil, printer's ink and paper made the air heavy and sickened Justine, who regretted that she had come. The unrestrained noise on all sides seemed to express the lawlessness of the place. She stopped on the landing undecided whether to go on or turn and leave when the glass door opened and a young man came towards her. He was dark-haired and rather stout, and he limped with his right leg.

"A Jew of course," thought Justine.

The man looked at the veiled woman curiously.

"Are you looking for someone?"

"I came to see Doctor von Neel."

"The doctor is very busy today," said the young man. "I am his secretary. Perhaps I could help you?"

The veil was not thick enough to conceal a look of utter indignation.

"Thank you, that wouldn't do. I have to talk to him personally." And she started down the hall toward the glass door.

The secretary, though he limped, was fast at her side.

"But Madam, the doctor is in conference. This is an unusual day. You must understand."

"I do understand," said Justine with the emphasis of an actress. "Will you please let me go now. I—" she took a deep breath. "I am Doctor von Neel's sister."

"Oh!" The young man, in speechless perplexity, did not interfere when she opened the glass door.

The small room was so filled with tobacco smoke that it left Justine nearly blind as she leaned against the inside of the door, her hands clutched around her parasol to master the trembling that came from the violent throb of her heart. Not for a moment had she considered that the secretary might speak the truth when he said her brother was in conference, and now she found all her plans thwarted by the presence of four men. At a large desk in the middle of the room sat Dr. Andreas von Neel. He was a tall stooped man, resembling his sister in nothing but the vivid greenish eyes and a certain emphasis of speech. At the sight of the veiled lady he took his pipe from his mouth and got up without leaving his desk.

"Madam?" His tone expressed surprise as well as irritation at being disturbed.

Justine's mouth was dry with emotion.

"Andreas," she exclaimed hoarsely. "Don't you recognize me?"

The man at the desk looked puzzled.

"No," he said with the uneasiness of a busy person who hates to waste time on charades. "That is to say —"

This was the moment Justine had been waiting for. With a sweeping gesture she threw the veil back over her hat and stretched both her hands toward her brother.

"Andreas," she sobbed, "It's I, your sister."

And she rushed forward and threw her arms around her brother's neck, kissing his throat since she could not reach his cheek. The doctor freed himself rather energetically.

"Well, Justine, of all people on earth - - - -" He was friendly, surprised, but there was a reserve in his voice. They had not seen each other for twenty-seven years, since the day on which Andreas von Neel had started his prison term for "Contempt of majesty and subversive propaganda."

"I came to thank you, Andreas." Justine grabbed her brother's hand. "I misjudged you. You are no traitor. I know it now. Your influence won over the Socialists and made them support our glorious cause. I am so proud of you, Andreas."

With tears in her eyes she looked so genuinely moved that Andreas von Neel felt a kind of sentimental sympathy.

"Sit down for a second," he said. "Oh well, I forgot to introduce my friends here. This is Hans Vogel, co-editor of our 'Advance,' Otto Rad from the party office, and Karl Liebknecht. You know him of course, you read his name in the papers every day."

"Yes, of course." Justine bowed her head stiffly towards men she considered monsters of immorality and destructiveness. "I came to talk to you alone, Andreas. Could we not —, I mean, would these gentlemen mind?"

"I'm sorry, Justine. We have very urgent business today. We can't lose time by shifting places. These are very dear friends of mine and there is nothing we couldn't talk over in their presence."

His penetrating eyes looked waitingly at his sister and his hand tipped a pencil up and down on the blotter.

Justine was disappointed. She had to admit to herself that it was not admiration for her brother's political influence that had brought her here. This spurious admiration had been nothing but a pretext. She knew that she had come to accuse, to square an old bill. Once in Berlin she had been overwhelmed by the desire to speak up and tell her brother how much bitterness and shame his dissension from class consciousness and family tradition had caused her. She wanted him to know that twenty years ago she had lost her job with the Bismarck family because of his editorial in the "Advance," and she wanted to see that life had punished the transgressor with failures and misery. But with three strangers in the room she had no chance. To keep the conversation going she concluded the line of her own thoughts with a sigh of artificial relief.

"It's so good to see you well and alive after all those dreadful things you did in your younger days. When I saw the extra about the support of the war credits by your party, I knew immediately that you must have changed, and that all your early sins can be forgotten now that you have proved yourself a true von Neel."

Andreas shifted uneasily on his chair.

"Look here, Justine," he said with constrained irritation. "I have not changed a bit. Don't fool yourself. This is neither the place nor the hour to explain to you point by point why the Socialist party acted as it did on the war question. But I can assure you that to underwrite this war has been a very grave decision; and it still remains to be seen whether we acted right." He gave Liebknecht a thoughtful look. "We chose support of the monarchy to avoid being outlawed and secure the opportunity to influence events. If the party were declared illegal we would not be able to protect workmen from exploitation, and the gains of years of labor legislation would be lost. But many of our friends think that the compromise was too dangerous and that the cause of the common people may be lost with this war. It might have escaped you in the jolly excitement of the day that this morning in Paris a very great man and leader, Jean Cohen, killed himself."

He spoke with a gravity that embarrassed his sister.

"The French are degenerate," she said lightly. "They have gone soft. They can't face a fight. Never mind the French. You did the right thing."

Andreas von Neel dropped his constraint. He had had enough.

"Phrases like that don't do in this room," he said sharply.

"It was nice you came, Justine, but we have to go on with our work." He stepped from behind the desk. "I am sorry to disappoint you by not having changed, but one thing is sure, sister, you didn't change either."

The irony of his tone was so obvious that Justine knew she had squandered her opportunity, and that her heroic decision to go into this "sink of subversion" and accuse her brother had led to nothing but her own humiliation. "Are you married?" She made a last attempt to win his attention.

"I was. My wife is dead."

"And have you children?"

"One daughter."

"Oh, how lovely!" cried Justine, falling automatically into the syrupy tone of conventional child adoration. "When can I see her?"

"You can't," said the man in his most unobliging tone. "Let's keep our worlds apart."

It was more a feeling of utter failure than her brother's refusal to let her see his child that infuriated Justine.

"That's you again!" she hissed. "That's your old ruthless and brutal self!"

"What else did you expect?" Andreas had one hand already on the knob of the door. "You said it yourself, didn't you? I am a true von Neel."

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In the Hotel Darmstädter Hof the Dallmann children had spent two boring hours. They had read through all the old copies of "The Week" and "The Garden Bower" which lay spread out in the lobby. Jarni and Jasper had played hide and seek behind the palm trees which stood withered and dusty in the four corners of the reception hall, and Freya had pounded out for the tenth time the Village Swallow Waltz. Now she was sitting with her back to the world, engrossed to the point of hypnosis in a love story by Hedwig Courts-Mahler. Even the young clerk had grown tired of the children, having told them all the riddles he knew and having demonstrated innumerable times the three card tricks he could manage. He was glad when his mother came to take over.

"I'm going now," he said. "The parade is going to start soon. They are assembling at the French Church. I have promised to be there to carry a torch."

"Promised whom?"

"The police sergeant. He was here this afternoon organizing our district. It will be a grand show."

"Run along," said the old woman. "And be careful. Torches are dangerous."

She settled down in an easy chair with a newspaper and paid no attention to the three children.

"I tell you it's going to start soon. I heard Erich say it," insisted Jarni in a low intense voice. "Our mother might not even come back and then—how are we going to see the parade?"

"You are not going to see it anyhow, because you were naughty," said Jasper restrainingly.

" — if mother returns," Jarni completed, stressing the "if" till it had crushed all probability.

"Why shouldn't mother come back?"

"Oh — on a day like this," Jarni hinted coldbloodedly. "She might have been murdered or run over or arrested."

Jasper felt a lump in his throat. He was very sensitive and completely dependent on the protection of the family.

"It's hideous to say anything like that. I'll tell mother when she comes back."

"She won't — she won't," Jarni sang in a triumphant voice as if she herself believed in her mother's disappearance. "I tell you, she won't. But never mind. You'll see the parade."

"I don't want to," pouted Jasper. He was too shocked by Jarni's allusions about his mother's fate to enjoy the idea of a parade.

"Oh yes, you want to," Jarni tried the suggestiveness of a hypnotist. "This kind of a parade will never come again. There will be the Kaiser, and the Kaiserin, and all the princes and princesses, hundreds of them. They will all wear golden dresses and golden uniforms and they'll have crowns on their heads, real crowns with stars and so on."

"But what if mother comes back while we are gone?" asked Jasper, his determination tottering under his sister's glamorous picture.

"I tell you she won't come back, but if she should — " Jarni pondered for a moment. "We could leave Freya behind so that she'll find someone here."

"Shall we go and ask her?" Jasper needed a higher authority to decide the case.

"No, for heaven's sake don't disturb her," said Jarni. "You know she is a mollycoddle. She won't let us go and we'll miss the parade."

"Go without her even knowing?" Jasper was horrified by the idea. "No, I won't do that."

"So you won't?" Jarni tried to win her brother over by scorn. She was bent on seeing the show but she was a little afraid of going all by herself. "You're a sissy, Jasper Dallmann. You'll never become a man hanging to the skirts of your older sister. Pooh!"

"I'm not a sissy," Jasper stamped his foot. "And I won't go without Freya knowing it. You are disobedient and mean. That's what you are if you go."

"All right, I am," said Jarni and before Jasper could appeal to Freya she had run through the lobby and out into the street.

Led by the din of music she ran toward the Market des Gendarmes. But when she reached the square it was already crammed with spectators forming a solid wall. While she fought her way to the French Church in the center of the plaza Jarni got pushed and kicked till her body hurt but she wouldn't go back to the hotel, not now that she would get punished anyhow. She clung to a lamppost and thought hard, twirling the brown curl on her forehead, and working out a plan. Instead of being pushed, and fighting back with fists and elbows, she decided to play on people's sympathy.

"Please, let me through," she pleaded in a trembling voice. "My father is over there. I have to talk to him. Mother has sent me." It worked because the expression in her large grey eyes was so convincing. Without a single push she reached the rope that had been thrown around the French Church, and like a cat she nestled to the side of a tall policeman standing in the cordon.

"Please, Mr. Sergeant, let me through. My big brother is in the church. My mother has sent me. I have to give him a message. It's very important."

As she spoke the church doors were flung open and man after man marched down the steps, carrying a flaming torch in his hands. It looked so beautiful that the policeman paid no attention to the little girl, who seized the opportunity and ran toward the procession. A band struck up the *Hohenfriedberger March* and the men carrying the brands fell into a goose step.

The hotel clerk had hardly left the church when Jarni snuggled her hand into his, and with a sweet smile said: "Please, let me go with you, Mister Erich? Just for a little while."

She had to take long strides to keep up with him.

"Look here, that's impossible. There are no little girls in this parade. Think what the officers will say."

"But, Mister Erich," Jarni had tears in her eyes. "I wouldn't find my way back to the hotel now. It's dark and I don't know where we are."

The man behind them had taken off the black, white and red sash all the torchbearers were wearing and was busy fixing it over Jarni's white skirt.

"Hello, pretty," he said. "Now you look like the daughter of the regiment. Here, have something to wave with." He took a small flag on a stick from his belt and handed it to Jarni. There was nothing Erich could do. If the local police sergeant accepted her, he would better not object.

They had reached the square in front of the castle. Jarni noticed a group of people on a balcony. They wore no gold uniforms and they had no crowns, but it did not matter because she had completely forgotten about the cause of this parade. She marched and sang, convinced that the waving and cheering of the crowd to her left and right was meant for her, for Jarni and no one else. They entered the Linden, passing the Kranzler Corner, where her mother had told her that she would never see the parade, and a jubilant feeling of being stronger than her parents filled her heart.

When shortly before midnight Erich carried her into the hotel, a slumped little bundle on his shoulders, Jarni was only half conscious of her mother's anxious face and Freya's tears. But she noticed with incredulous surprise that her mother neither scolded nor spanked her and that the kisses she felt on her cheeks had the warmth of immense relief. It was a lovely feeling, and with a smile she fell asleep, knowing even in her dreams that she — Jarni — had been the only girl in the big parade.

VI. Yesterday's Parents

The smouldering peat smelled. It was not the right kind of fuel. The huge tile stove in Babette Dallmann's parlor was built for anthracite, but there was none now. Most miners were soldiers in 1916 and what little coal was produced kept U-boats and munition factories going. It could not be squandered on the stove of an old woman and a dying one at that. If it had not been for the shock, it would have been a relief when a detonation sent two window-panes crashing into the room and with them a gust of fresh wind that dispersed the suffocating smoke. The three young people who had been sitting around the mahogany table were shaken out of their silence.

"An air raid!" said Jasper. "Did you hear? It must be a dirigible." But before his sisters could answer there came detonation after detonation. With the last one the whole frame of the French window crashed into the room. Jarni, who stood next to it, made a quick leap to avoid a direct hit. The noise outside had become so deafening that the children at first only saw but did not hear their father, who stood in the door of the bedroom.

"This is the end." It was not clear whether he referred to his mother's life or to the world at large. "The wind is sweeping over her bed. There is not a window pane left. We must find some boards to close the opening. Come with me," he shouted through the din of a new explosion to his son. "And you," he said to his daughters, "go and help mother."

Jarni and Freya tiptoed into the adjoining bedroom. It was no longer a gypsy den or a rococo boudoir but a sober bourgeois bedroom furnished without imagination as if its inhabitant had moved into it without the intention of staying long. A severe coal shortage had made it impossible to heat the high ceilinged dining room with its bee-hive of wardrobe cells, and Amos Dallmann had insisted that his mother move into one of the small flats on the third floor of her house. Babette had hated to give up her dreamland and had nearly frozen to death. But when she fell ill of pneumonia she had been removed by force, and protestingly she had left China, Greece, and Scheherezade to try at the age of eighty-three to become a normal old woman.

Freya and her mother struggled before the empty window frame to tie the drapes together, bracing themselves against a storm that tore the pictures from the wall. But Jarni did not help them. She stood rooted near the bed, unable to take her eyes from her grandmother's face. Many pillows kept the frail body in a half-sitting position, but the helpless swaying of her head showed that all physical control had left her. She smiled, her eyes half-closed; and it was this smile that fascinated Jarni. To her twelve years, death had no other connotation than boundless horror and she could not grasp the meaning of this smiling face which she had been told belonged to a dying person.

Father and Jasper had come back with a table top and some cardboard for the window opening. The clank of hammer and nails, closer to her darkening mind than the explosions outside, awakened Babette Dallmann for the last time. With a sudden jerk she stiffened her neck and her widely opened eyes saw Jarni.

"Child," she whispered, "come, child. It's cold." And with unexpected strength the limp hand drew the girl close to her shivering body.

"Lizzy," whispered the old woman, "good that you came back. Betty is hungry, do you hear? Betty — is — so — hungry."

The last words were not spoken. A panting exhausted voice had breathed them into the cold air. Now there was silence. The old head made a last impotent sway and came to a rest on Jarni's chest.

The child was too awestruck to move. The light head rested like a rock upon her body.

"Mother!"

Justine turned around. Calmly she drew her husband's attention to the bed and continued her work. Amos Dallmann closed his mother's half-opened eyes and joined her hands together. Babette Dallmann's restless features were relaxed in the tired peace of death, but Jarni no longer looked at her grandmother. She stared in her father's face, that was wet with tears. The sudden realization that there were human emotions behind the iron wall of authority—that her father felt the same grief as she—was so overwhelming that she flung herself into his arms. Amos was soon to forget this moment, or if he did not forget it he suppressed its memory because sentimentality had no place in his pedagogic principles. But there by the wind-swept, explosion-shaken deathbed of his mother, he kissed his daughter's hair and stroked her shaking body. Jarni, with a child's longing for love, never quite forgot the moment of their united grief and kept its memory as something strange and beautiful that had happened to her.

It was Justine who finally broke the spell. "Come, Jarni," she said with kindness but so frighteningly composed. "You'd better go now. Father and I have duties here."

"I can't, mother."

"You must pull yourself together!" Justine's voice had a trace of impatience. "That's what we all have to do. Jasper and Freya are waiting. They'll take you home." Jarni looked at her father. She hoped he would let her stay. But Amos did not see her. He stood beside the bed in the same stooped position in which he had held his daughter. His mind was absent, far away in his childhood, that had been darkened by the shadow of his father's spirit and by the thoughtless isolation in which the dead woman on the bed had left him. His tears were not, like Jarni's, tears of parting. They were the helpless tears of final failure to understand and forgive his mother.

The presence of death had so dominated them that the three Dallmann children had completely forgotten about the explosions.

But when they left their grandmother's house and entered the street they heard the screams of sirens and saw people rushing past them.

"It must be close. I can smell the fire." Jasper took a deep breath of the December air, acrid with the odor of burning. "It comes from the armory. Let's go there."

They had rounded the third corner when they saw the huge complex of the ammunition factory ablaze. A barricade kept them from going farther, but even from a distance they could see the fire raging through the ruins. Steel girders, black against the red blaze, were curling up like snakes and each falling wall sent a spray of golden sparks into the black night sky. The small explosions of ammunition still in the building made the flames leap up like fireworks and kept the firemen helpless.

"How did it happen?" gasped Freya. "Who did it?" An old gentleman with the unmistakable features of a former officer turned around.

"Young lady," he said with suppressed fury, "can you ask who committed a crime like that? Communists, of course. They want us to lose this war."

Freya was intimidated to the point of tears by his harsh voice and looked helplessly at her brother. Her fair skin blushed easily, and her pretty face had a continuous expression of worry and fright in spite of her seventeen years. Jasper nodded. He seemed to approve of the old gentleman's views and Freya gathered courage, but the earsplitting noise of ambulance sirens shook her regained confidence. Soldiers in field-gray uniforms pushed the barricades away and cleared a passage. The movement was so sudden that Jarni lost hold of her sister's hand and now stood alone at the curb, the foremost in a multitude of onlookers. Slowly the train of ambulances driven by women with tense white faces, groped its way through the crowd. The cars were filled to capacity, the white caps of the nurses set against the dark figures of the injured workers. The third car came to a standstill in front of

Jarni. A woman was sitting beside the driver in the front seat but she did not actually sit. She leaned against the back wall, her eyes closed, her blood-soaked hair glued to her waxy face. She was very young, and her youth made her plight even more horrible. When the ambulance came to a sudden stop her head slid from its prop and fell on her shoulder. A streak of brownish-red blood trickled over the white door.

"She's dead," cried Jarni. The similarity of this movement and her grandmother's swaying head was too striking. "Don't you see, she's dead?"

The driver turned an apathetic face toward her.

"Shut up," she said without violence, and fixing her eyes again on the car in front of her, she jerked the body of the young woman back to its former position. Then they drove on.

Jarni stood frozen when the crowd closed in again on the barricades and she still stood there when everyone had gone and a policewoman tapped her on the shoulder.

"Any of your family in there?" she asked sympathetically. Jarni shook her head.

"Then you'd better go home. It's a cold night. Where do you live?"

"Pine Hill," answered Jarni obediently, but now that she could talk, her tears started to run again. The policewoman patted her arm.

"Come on, sister, don't you cry. You are old enough to find your way home."

"It's not that," protested Jarni. Even in her greatest grief and bewilderment she resented being looked upon as helpless. "But why do they all have to die?"

The woman seemed to understand now. "They are better off, anyway," she said, and her nearly cheerful tone stopped Jarni's tears. "They don't suffer any more!"

"Grandmother smiled," said Jarni slowly. The inexplicable smile was suddenly back in her memory. "But she was hungry, terribly hungry. That's what she said last before she died."

"So am I," said the officer, and buried her hands between the black leather belt and her jacket. "She has enough now, hasn't she?" She walked away, leaving Jarni strangely comforted by a sudden realization of her own gnawing want for food.

Freya and Jasper huddled beside the kitchen stove, that was sending out with scanty heat the same biting smoke of smouldering peat that had filled grandmother's living room. Turnips, boiling on the fire, added to the smell, but the children were used to it. They did not even cough any more. When Jarni staggered into the kitchen she was only half-conscious. The intense cold and a raving hunger had completely exhausted her. She took a ladle and filled a dish with the steaming mixture of water, turnips, and cornmeal.

"It's not ready yet," protested Freya. "I only put it on when we came in."

"I don't care." Jarni blew vigorously over her plate. "If I don't eat I'll pass out."

"You are greedy," Freya said contemptuously. But she went and cut a chunk of greyish bread from a loaf, weighed it diligently on a letter scale and marked the result on a chart which showed the exact amount of food consumed by each member of the family. "You know you should wait till the table is set and we can eat properly."

Jarni did not answer. She had burned her mouth and was fanning it with one hand while with the other she picked coarse lumps of potato from the bread.

"Don't do that!" Jasper was disgusted. "It looks piggish. With the potato gone the bran isn't edible."

"Never mind," said Jarni. "These are my fifty grams and I can do with them as I please."

She mixed the potato lumps in her soup and made a new attempt to gulp the hot broth.

"As you please, as you please," sneered Jasper. "I know you.

Eat as much margarine as you please and then go and steal mother's ration. You have no discipline. That's it."

Jarni was embarrassed, but she tried not to show it. She had once stolen her mother's weekly allowance of margarine, and had been ostracized by the whole family for lack of morale. But it had not been the contempt that had hurt her. The bad part about the incident was that her mother had merely cried instead of punishing her. The constant lack of food had produced in her an unscrupulous determination to get what she needed. There was no room for other considerations. Even now her appetite was so sharp that she forgot about the day's experiences until she had emptied her plate.

"Did you see the dead woman in the ambulance seat, Freya? Horrid, wasn't she?"

"I see enough of them in the hospital." Freya was training to become a nurse, and three months among wounded soldiers and famished civilians had given her the same indifference shown by the policewoman.

"I talked to an officer," Jarni was back now in the horrible reality. "She thought they were better off anyway, grandmother and the factory girls, all of them."

"Of course they are." Jasper's face twitched. He had a delicate stomach and could not stand turnips and potato bread. "When you're dead you don't get hungry. But before I die I want to pay them back."

"Whom? The Communists?" Jarni was still so beset by the factory blast that the war in France and Russia had been eclipsed for the moment.

"No." Jasper flipped his hand impatiently. "I don't believe in that. The old man in the street was wrong."

"You could have told him."

"I could not. He was a former officer. It would have been disrespectful." He pressed both his hands against his aching stomach. "The English and the French, they brought it all on us. They send their spies and saboteurs into every town. They killed those workers. I want to get at them before I die." He stared into the glow behind the oven shutters, his black eyes full of hate, his fourteen-year old face aged by suffering. Jarni looked at him, frightened and dismayed. His acceptance of the imminence of death confirmed a dim notion in her mind that obliteration had become more natural than survival. Men were being killed by the millions, but they died unseen in faraway lands. No child was able to realize a soldier's death from a newspaper report or a letter of condolence. But the shattered windows, the outcry for food from a dying woman, the flaming ruins of the factory, the tortured body in the front seat of the ambulance, and, stronger than all, her brother's submission to death, made her realize that the air was filled with destruction. No matter how far destiny would go in fulfilling her dreams of a rich life, she and her generation would always look upon violence and death as organic elements of human existence, rendering them callous to the horrors of war and bloodshed.

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The funeral was over. Babette Kretzschmar and Kuno Dallmann now rested beside each other for an eternity neither of them had wished to share with the other. While the solemnity of the setting and the sentimentality of the sermon had brought Freya and Jasper to tears, it had left Jarni unmoved. Standing beside the grave she was struggling with the emotional experiences of the last three days. She tried to reconcile the crushing fact of death with her grandmother's last smile, and she understood that one's last moment was part of the individual fate. It could be bloody and wild, but it also could be merciful. To die in bed in times of carnage, unmangled by bombs, unburned by blasts, was like a last reward, a tribute to human dignity — something one met like a last stroke of great luck. Grandmother, the queer companion of nickel shows and dreamland excursions, had had a good death, and Jarni smiled, waiting her turn to throw three handfuls of dirt on the coffin.

Only two of Kuno and Babette Dallmann's sons met after the funeral with their families. Erwin, the third boy, had become an American, and Jan, the sculptor, had died ten years before under symptoms reminiscent of his father's mental illness. Franz was there, a commander in the navy, his Swedish wife, and their eldest son Siegfried, with one foot amputated and one eye blinded in the battle of Verdun. His younger brother Harold was fighting with the army in France.

The two older Dallmanns had little in common. Franz was self-possessed and noisy, a lover of tall tales and romantic patriotism. From Sebastian, the postmaster, he had inherited shrewdness and self-confidence, but the predilection for the past as an easy escape from acute political problems was Jan Kretzschmar's heritage. Of all the Dallmanns he showed the strongest influence of Slavic ancestors. His cheekbones were high, his black eyes slanting, and his skull as round as a bowling ball. This, however, did not prevent him from supporting theories establishing the supremacy of the Nordic race.

"Look at Hilda," he said, breaking the depressed silence around the dinner table. "Look at a purely nordic neck line and then compare the mongrels we saw today in the cemetery." Without asking her permission, he unbuttoned his wife's high collar, spanning her wrinkled neck with his hand as if he wanted to strangle her.

"Franz, please," she whispered, but her husband did not pay the slightest attention to her. While he indulged in a one-sided argument about the advisability of state-controlled eugenics, Justine brought the second course, and it was sheer surprise that terminated the commander's tirade. On the table stood a ham, pink and brown, deliciously scented; a genuine ham, flawless as a poster.

"Won't you carve it?" said Justine to her husband, trying to hide her excitement by a matter-of-fact tone. Amos gave her a stern look.

"Where did you get that? Don't you know the sale of meat is strictly prohibited?"

Justine put one finger over her lips and looked with a frown toward the children. "Don't ask now. I shall explain later."

"I say this is a shame." Father brandished knife and fork, trying to find the best place to start carving. "If we, the educated class, don't set an example, what discipline can we expect from the proletariat!" He had made his decision and cut a steaming slice from the meat.

"It's self-denial and self-sacrifice that we need," he mumbled, chipping a corner from the butt and stuffing it into his mouth. "It must have been smuggled in from Poland or Bohemia."

Nobody cared to supplement his remarks. All eyes were glued to the ham, all ears deaf to anything but the delicate sound of the carving knife.

"Here we sit feasting on a ham, all in honor of my poor mother, who died of starvation." Amos tried a last feeble protest. "You should have known better, Justine."

But Justine sat with a stubborn expression of satisfaction on her face, counting the slices which Amos heaped on the plates. They were devoured in complete silence and a haste which resulted from guilty consciences and extreme hunger.

His stomach filled, Franz continued where he had left off at the appearance of the ham. He was busy painting the glorious future of the Nordic race after the war, when Siegfried interrupted him with a tormented face.

"Please, don't talk like that, father. You know as well as I do that things look bad since America threatens to come in on the Allied side. They are as Nordic as you wish you were; but I doubt that they will consider us their brothers after they have won the war."

His face looked mask-like with a large black shield covering his left eye. Two bitter lines from his nose to the well-formed mouth were the only signs of a suffering life.

"Nordic-American," snarled his father. "They are niggers, Poles, Greeks, and Jews, the greatest hodge-podge of inferior races. They have no God, no leadership and no morale, and they think they can defeat a Hohenzollern? Ridiculous!"

"Our leadership is no better than theirs, probably worse," snapped Siegfried. "Our famous morale cracks on all sides with or without God or the Hohenzollerns. Remember that lawsuit Rosa Luxemburg brought in the spring of 1914 against the state to show how badly soldiers were treated in the Kaiser's army. It's worse now ——"

"I forbid you to mention the name of this woman in my presence," shouted the commander.

"And why not?" Siegfried's voice was no longer tortured. It was tart and sarcastic. "When I read her nauseous evidence of privates flogged with bayonets, drowned in cesspools, and driven insane by confinement in coal bunkers, I thought the same as you and the state attorney: 'Propaganda, crude, lying, socialist propaganda!' But during this war I have seen nearly as much sadism and brutality behind the lines as on the battlefield. Our officers have as much contact with the ranks as — " he stopped a moment to find the proper comparison, "as you with reality." His one eye, more impressive by its isolation, gave his father a disdainful look.

"If it were not for your wounds," the commander said gloomily. "If you had not been an officer, I would tell you what I think of your attitude."

"Never mind my wounds," said his son coldly. "I got them because I believed in tall words. The war woke me up. Patriotism is opium for imbeciles. Nobody can fool me any longer." He pushed his chair back, grabbed his cane, and limped from the table.

His mother pressed her napkin to her mouth and cried noiselessly. Amos bit his lower lip, but Justine spoke up.

"It must have been the pain," she suggested realistically. "It must have gone to his head. Things like that happen often nowadays."

"Maybe," said Franz, unconvinced, and started to roll himself a cigarette from chopped walnut leaves. "But he'd better re-cover his mind soon. There are limits to tolerance, even with officers."

That same night the three Dallmann children sat around the kitchen table to do their home work, sharing what little light there was from an asthmatic carbide lamp. Freya, looking up from a chart of human muscles, said dreamily:

"Uncle Franz is my ideal. He is a real man."

"I don't like him." Jarni interrupted her mathematics. "He's a bully the way he treated Siegfried."

"Siegfried is a weakling. He is degenerate and destructive," preached Freya. "Hearing him, one could think he does not even believe in our victory."

As if by cue, Jasper put down his pen.

"But what if he is right? What if the war ends before I get a chance to fight?" His face was twisted by apprehension.

"Wouldn't that be too bad if this nice war were suddenly over!" Jarni sneered. She had only one wish: to get rid of it all—death, explosions, Uncle Franz, and the letter-scale diet.

"You are stupid, as stupid as a stupid chicken." Jasper dwelled on each "stupid" with growing scorn. "If only you would keep your stupid mouth shut!"

Their mother had come into the kitchen to warm water on a small kerosene stove.

"Why do you pick on Jarni?" she said wearily. Her nerves, frayed by war and food worries, were sensitive to arguments. There was little left in her of the exultant enthusiasm she had felt at the beginning of the war. In three years Justine had become an old woman determined to stick it out, but haunted by dark forebodings that disaster was imminent.

"Nothing," said Jasper sullenly. "She's so stupid, she could kill anyone's hope with her silly remarks."

The mother did not answer and went on pouring hot water into the earthenware warming pans.

"Jasper," said Freya with tender persuasion. "Why are you afraid? You'll have plenty of time to fight, and it'll be men like you who will finally win the victory."

Jasper's drawn face lighted with vision. "Maybe we'll be the heroes."

Justine was now ready to leave the kitchen.

"Heroes," she said to her son in a slow lashing tone. "Real heroes I mean, not mouth heroes—the kind Germany needs to win this war—are made from different stuff than you. Better realize that before you've made yourself ridiculous."

The boy slumped under her words. His mother's allusions to his physical weakness, his lack of skill in sports, had been frequent since the beginning of the war, but she had never before formulated so clearly and relentlessly her disappointment in him. Since early childhood Jasper had known that he was closest to his mother's heart. All the love and tenderness that lay hidden under her cool exterior, Justine had heaped on her only son. She had taken it for granted that he would become the personification of all her ideals, a great hero and patriot. It was like a blank check on destiny, and she had never bothered to compare her dream with reality. When the war came she identified herself completely with its aims and searched frantically for sacrifices she could bring to the cause of the fatherland. She lived ascetically, even for the meager living standards customary with the German middle class. She worked untiringly in Red Cross hospitals and War Orphan shelters, and she knitted and sewed till late at night to supply some unknown soldier with warm underwear and stockings. But all that was not enough. She wanted to contribute what millions of other German mothers had given: a man, a soldier — a defender. Watching the boys of other families prepare for war, she had suddenly realized that her contribution would be a failure, and that her son was not of the stuff heroes are made of. Jasper was a bookish boy who knew the dates and facts of science and history as other boys knew football scores. His incessant reading aggravated his nearsightedness, and his frail health made him susceptible to colds and indigestion. It was not given to Justine to see the relative merit of individuals. It was the absolute she was after, and her son's failure to respond to this absolute standard rendered not only him but her worthless for the cause. She had come to identify her children completely with the German aims of expansion and world position. They were her contribution to the fatherland's greatness and she now blamed herself bitterly for having been too soft with her boy, too unaware of his sole and sacred calling as a hero.

"She'll be sorry some day for what she said." Jasper looked defiantly toward the kitchen door through which his mother had left. "If she knew, she would be sorry." His tone tried to establish as an accomplished fact a resolution he had made that very second.

"What is it?" asked Freya eagerly. "What did you do?"

"I've signed up with the Student's Defense Guild," he answered in a forcibly calm voice.

"Did they take you? They are mighty particular. I thought their members had to have perfect eyesight and had to be at least sixteen years of age."

"They took me, as you see," he said slightly irritated. "There are exceptions in cases of special merit." And suddenly realizing the precariousness of the situation, he added: "But don't tell anybody! I've been pledged to silence on account of my age."

The two younger Dallmann children were not quite two years apart and had spent their childhood as closely as twins. All his life Jasper had loved his sister with an angry and hopeless love. Where he was slow, clumsy and timid, Jarni was careless, cunning and quick. He had relied on her to save him from the constant troubles that seemed to haunt him. When they grew older the mockery of other boys about his companionship with a little girl created a deep resentment in him. He tried desperately to ignore her existence, but he soon realized how difficult that was after many years of complete dependence. Ashamed of his helplessness he had become increasingly hostile towards her.

Every morning they left together for school. They usually got a ride on the baker's wagon down Pine Hill to the suburb where the electric train from the city ended its route, but after Jasper had disclosed his pretended membership in the Student's Defense Guild his habits changed. He got up at five o'clock and ran through the woods. He spurned rides and left two hours earlier, walking five miles to the city. He exchanged his school bag for a soldier's knapsack which seemed to grow heavier every day. This old worn bag was guarded by him like a treasure chest; no one was allowed to touch it or see its contents. He took ice-cold showers, and finally conditioned himself to taking dips in the frozen mill pond. Nobody knew whether he minded Jarni's or his schoolmates' sarcastic remarks. His lips grew tight when he heard their jokes, but he went on with his hardening exercises. He knew they would not take him at the Student's Defense Guild if he could not share their rigorous training, and to join he had to enter the army as a sub-lieutenant and to get ahead of most of his classmates. The lack of adequate food and the enormous strain wore him down. He soon refused to talk to anyone, and fell asleep as soon as he sat in a chair.

This went on for a long dragging winter. When spring came it became clear that Jasper Dallmann would not be promoted. Jasper, the best scholar, the shining example of the school, had given up learning to such an extent that he had flunked. Neither teachers nor parents felt an obligation to investigate this sudden slump. Amos only saw the bleak result of his son's failure and the danger of wasted opportunity. During the years spent in the carpenter's workshop he had come to understand that it was not wealth that confirmed membership in German society but "Bildung" — a standard of education and manners exclusive with the upper caste. And he had sacrificed his young manhood to erase in long night courses the social stigma of manual labor. If his son did not improve his scholastic record he would be expelled from High School, threatened by the same degradation of becoming nothing but an artisan, and his own efforts to rehabilitate the honor of his family would have been in vain. For days and nights he hammered down on his boy's nerves in violent castigations, releasing the fears and frustrations of his own youth.

The boy was caught between two fires. Without a completed secunda course he could not become an officer, and without stiff physical exercise he could not become a hero. Unassisted by advice or human sympathy he fought a bleak, lonely battle against his father's threats and his mother's scorn. He went back to his books, forcing his tired underfed body to sit up long nights to catch up with the school curriculum. But he did not give up walking four hours a day, carrying the heavy knapsack.

One morning before school Jarni found this knapsack lying on her raincoat on a chair in the hall. She tried to lift the bag, but it was too heavy. Impatiently she pushed it aside and with much noise it crashed to the floor. Curiously she opened the flap and bricks fell out, three — five — nine — a whole pile of masonry. While Jarni still knelt on the floor pondering over her discovery, her brother came in.

"The mystery of Jasper, the hod carrier, has been solved. Bricks instead of books, a truly heroic idea!" she flouted.

But Jasper Dallmann had suffered too much to understand a joke. He had forgotten nothing. His mother's constant nagging, the sneering of his classmates had hurt, but Jarni's irony scarred his pride even more. With every brick added to the load and carried for ten long miles while his stomach was empty and wooden shoes chafed his feet, he had tried to establish a superiority which would be unattainable to her as a woman. That morning when he heard her ironical remark about the inglorious aid to heroism, his self-control snapped. He bent down and picked up two bricks. But even now Jarni was quicker. She jumped up, and, looking into her brother's face, knew what he had in mind.

"He's killing me," she screamed, racing down the hall. "He's killing me."

Her father, running from his bedroom, caught Jasper's hand

and wrested one brick from him. Justine came running after, a morning gown hastily wrapped around her.

"What are you doing, you fool?" shouted Amos. "You are killing your sister?"

"Killing? Nonsense, you're all hysterical." Justine's voice was cool. She turned to her daughter. "It's all your fault; no one else's but yours. Jasper is no longer a boy to be teased. He's a man." And going after her son, who went slowly, groggily down the hall to where the bricks were scattered over the floor, she put her arm around his shoulders.

"I knew it all. I've watched you for a long time. You thought I didn't know what you were doing. But I found out, and I'm proud of you!" Jasper looked at his mother with a blank, worn face. "I'm proud of you, Jasper," she repeated. "Now that you have proved yourself over a whole year I know you'll become a hero."

The boy smiled. For the first time since the war began, he smiled a happy and relaxed smile, and he tried to swallow the tears he did not want to show, but they kept running down his face.

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The dark clouds over Germany were so heavy one could almost see them penetrate the walls. The big shiny gas lamp over the family table of the Dallmanns hung dead. The gas supply of the township was exhausted and there was no coal to produce more. Drapes, bedspreads, table covers, were gone, sewn into crude garments by hand since the use of the sewing machine would cost too much thread. After a series of begging letters to a cousin who owned a paper mill, Justine had finally procured a bolt of discarded felt used for filtering paper pulp. She and Freya had worked their hands sore with the unwieldy material, and when Jarni finally held her new, machine oil-scented coat in her hands, she discovered it could stand up by itself.

But all that would not have counted if it had not been for the constant want of food that aggravated other hardships out of proportion. What to eat and how to get it had become the foremost idea in all brains, gradually blotting out interest in anything else, including the outcome of the war. Each Monday when the yellow and green food stamps were distributed, Justine cut one day's supply from hers, her husband's and her daughters' cards, adding it to her son's allotment. Jasper's attack on Jarni had finally earned him official recognition as a prospective hero and with it a doubling of his food ration. But for Jarni it meant more hunger, less sleep, and more hatred for the self-righteous smile on her mother's face.

The gray spring of 1918 was nearly over when Jasper was called to the colors. He was seventeen years old, short for his age and pitiably thin although the coarse cloth of the uniform concealed his lack of muscles. He had a bad cough that first night he showed himself in his new glory, his right hand was bandaged, blistered from handling a rifle, and his weak eyes red-rimmed from overstrain. He seemed to have overcome the shock of being nothing but a buck private because he talked with the authority of a general, assuring ignorant civilians of an imminent victory. Reports of mutiny and defeat had filtered through the censorship, and Amos Dallmann, the faithful medium of every generally accepted opinion, voiced his worries.

"There are too many rumors in the air about lack of morale. It seems that even the armed forces are war-tired."

"Propaganda," Jasper assured him hastily. "Obvious and cheap propaganda spread by the Allies. We in the army know the true facts. The Kaiser would not lie to his soldiers, not after he has shared the trenches for four years with them. He has reassured us in his last message that the day of reckoning is near. — There are indications, the details of which I cannot reveal," he added with stilted importance, "that a big offensive will come in the West."

"When?" asked his mother, with the apprehension of all mothers in her voice.

"I hope not before August," smiled Jasper. "That is the earliest they will send us to the front."

VII. Hope Ends All Wars

Jarni Dallmann had none of the friendships of other girls. Books, music, and the dramatic cycle of changing seasons in the nature around her, fed her fantasy with an abundance of dreams that could not be shared. Some of the village children would join her as players in improvised performances under the linden trees in her father's garden, or as voices for puppets she had made from pine cones, chestnuts, and twine. But when the play was ended she returned to her books, piled high in an old garden house that could be warmed by an open wood fire, or to a hide-out in the branches of a birch tree. There she sat for hours, watching boats and log rafts float down the river from the nearby Bohemian border, farmers and cattle on the river meadows, the far-flung city, and the changing colors over the Ore Mountains.

With many other things the fourth winter of war had swept this contentment away. She had not touched her puppets, she hardly remembered the plays she had written for them, and she had given up reading. Her favorites, the Arabian Nights, Strindberg's and Hauptmann's legend plays, even Lessing, her great Saint, had lost their meaning. For the first time she longed for company she could see and feel and hear. She did not turn to her mother. The instinct of bloodrelationship told her that it would be a failure. The bewildering experience of her brother's savage attack and her mother's proud and ready acceptance of it had destroyed all bridges.

There was no one but Freya, although much in her sister's character puzzled Jarni. She was slow, and her late development gave her at the age of nineteen the air of a girl in the first throes of adolescence. An extreme shyness kept her from making friendships, no matter how deeply she wanted understanding and companionship. Learning had been a torture to her, and Jasper's and

Jarni's good school records had added greatly to her feeling of inferiority. She was pretty and this might have worked as a compensation, but her mother thought otherwise. For Justine, love had never lost the stigma of lewdness and brutality attached to it by her medieval education in a school for daughters of titled families. Under the pressure of reality, she had eventually rationalized sex into a sacrifice demanded of women for the preservation of the race, and she had borne twenty-one years of married life with resigned dutifulness. Marriage, of course, was the ultimate destiny of her daughters, but she fought bitterly against contacts with men that would not serve the strictly ethical purpose of founding a family. It was not a religious concept of sin which caused her to hate and persecute erotic relationships. It was the backward swing of the pendulum, the conviction that the fervent devotion her parents had felt for each other had been responsible for her father's relinquishment of family wealth and aristocratic tradition, and for his early death.

With a typically female facility for bending facts Justine had suppressed in her mind the knowledge that her father had been already hopelessly ill with tuberculosis when he met Clara Posener. She insisted that "this insane passion" had poisoned him to such an extent that he had thrown away his own happiness and with it the standing and fortune of his children. The constant allusions of indignant relatives to her father's "curse" had fallen on good soil with Justine. She was beset by fear that the evil spell of this passion might befall her daughters and she had missed no opportunity to warn them against contact with men.

Freya Dallmann's nature, much more given to devotion than to analysis, tried frantically to find compensation in faith, but there was no religious tradition to provide her with self-evident worship. The Lutheran church, of which her family was a member, had ceased to play any influential part in the life of the upper middle-class. Orthodox ministers advocated a sinister gospel of revenge and punishment that had been thoroughly discredited by the scholastic standards of higher education. Reformers tried to stem the flight of the congregation by rationalistic expediency, but their secularism left Freya's wanting soul starved. In default she, with many others of her generation, turned to a mystic romanticism. She joined the Youth Movement which shortly before the first World War had sprung up as a protest against intellectualism and alienation from nature. It established youth and the ideals of young people as an aim in itself, and its famous "Meissner Formula" called on all young Germans to lead their lives henceforth "under their own destiny, their own responsibility, and their own standards of truth." New leaders aimed at creating a "youth culture" which was to differ entirely from the aims of the traditional student fraternities and clerical or patriotic youth groups who were accused of considering young people as "substandard adults." An original style of dressing, talking, eating was introduced, and the militant patriotism of imperialistic youth groups was changed into a mystical worship of "folkdom," amalgamated with ideas of racial selection and vows of purity, humility, and abstinence. Freya's devotion to these ideas, her self-denying zeal in spreading the gospel, and her abysmal seriousness, soon made her a leader. When she invited her little sister in the summer of 1918 to attend a solstice celebration with her, and to sing as a solo the famous Fire Song, Jarni felt with pride that Freya was willing to introduce her to a group in which she enjoyed great authority.

There were no longer any coaches in passenger trains; they were used for troop transports. Freya and her friends stood crowded in a cattle wagon on their way to the mountains. The air got sticky and the straps of the rucksack cut into Jarni's shoulders, but she did not complain. She had resolved to live up to her sister's ascetic standards and to show herself worthy of the Youth Movement. It was a resolution easy to keep when they finally left the train and started to march. The heat of the June day had abated into the tender coolness of an early summer evening. The air was full of the scent of flowers and meadows and the endless jubilation of larks swung over the fields. Jarni, so open to the fascination of nature, was happy. They had marched for more than an hour when her shoulders began to ache again. Sleeping blanket, food ration, coat and portable stove were a heavy load. And there were her shoes. What shoes they were! The upper parts were made from coarse cloth woven from nettle fibre, and the soles consisted of wood-pieces, joined together by canvas strips like those of a tap-dancer. No one wore stockings. The two pairs available per year had to be saved for the winter, and the rough material of the shoes chafed the skin. Jarni tried to walk on her toes when her heels gave out, but the weight on her shoulders held her down. She tried to shift her rucksack from one side to the other and to pad the sore spots with her handkerchief, but it would not help. She had forgotten about the beauty of the summer night. She felt only miserable.

It seemed as if they were marching faster and faster. The tempo was set by a soldier on furlough whom everybody adoringly called "the knight." He walked at the head of the group, a tall fellow with long legs, swinging a stick over his head like a drum major and singing with a voice that shook the trees:

From the soldier's banded cap
Plumes are nodding in the breeze,
Lance and arrow, spear and sword
Tore to shreds the tabard's fleece.

"How far is it still?" Jarni finally asked her neighbor. He was a thin boy with spectacles and a wild shock of blonde hair.

"Another hour, I guess. But the last part is tough. It's the slope, you know."

The news of another hour of increased hardship was too much for her. Jarni forgot that she had resolved to be brave, and started to cry, her head bowed and her hands stuffed between the rucksack and her aching back. The boy looked at her from the side of his glasses.

"What's your name?"

"Jarni." It was hardly audible.

"Who is your sponsor?"

Jarni did not understand.

"I mean, who brought you here? Who has pledged for you?"

"Freya, I guess; she's my sister."

"Oh!" The boy was deeply impressed by Jarni's connections. "Freya is your sister?"

It must have been her name that caused Freya to turn around from the front row.

"No conversations," she said sternly. "We need our breath for singing."

But the little talk had helped Jarni and she stood the strain until they reached the slope. When she saw the pathless wilderness of rock and brushwood she gave up. Dusk was gathering and nobody noticed that she dropped out of the line. She sat down in a patch of spear grass and let the rucksack slip from her shoulders. She unlaced the paper strings holding her shoes together and stripped her feet. The air cooled her sore skin, and by mere force of contrast she felt delightfully comfortable. The mountains were still light from the last rays of the setting sun, but the plains were already dark, and with its one shining eye a small lake mirrored the gentle twilight of the sky. There were no farms or villages near. The silence was perfect. With a deep sigh of happiness Jarni stretched out. From the thicket came the song of a nightingale. With her dimming consciousness Jarni heard it and fell asleep.

It was the boy who had marched beside her who woke her up after short minutes of dreamy lightness.

"Jarni," he said as if he had been used to this peculiar name all his life. "Jarni, wake up. What are you doing here? The others are already near the peak."

"I don't care," said Jarni without shifting her body. "Do you hear? That's a real nightingale. I've always wanted to hear one."

But the boy did not care for nightingales.

"Get up," he urged. "We have to hurry. Freya was the first to notice that you were missing. She is plenty mad at you. Plenty — " he added with emphasis.

Her sister's name made Jarni sit upright.

"But I can't go," she said complainingly. "My back, my shoulders and my feet are sore. I'm tired. I want to sleep."

"Sleep? You're crazy. You are spoiling everything. Freya will be upset and then all unity will be gone. Come, put your shoes on, be a sport."

But Jarni could not. Her feet had swollen to elephantine size. With a weird smile she looked up in the boy's face.

"I'm so sorry," she apologized, and made another attempt to get into her shoes. Fear of losing her sister's new friendship was stronger than pain or fatigue.

"I could go barefoot," she offered finally. "I could try at least."

"You don't know that slope or you would not talk like that."

The boy looked up at the ridge, which now was menacingly dark.

"We must get you up there, no matter what it costs." He sat down and started to unlace his boots.

"With the present size of your trotters these might fit you." His were soldiers' boots made from fine strong leather, the brass hooks shining even in the dark. Jarni watched him.

"What's your name?"

"Erich."

"Erich," repeated Jarni. "I like that name." For a moment she was back in 1914 holding the hand of Erich, the hotel clerk, and marching through Berlin — the only girl in the big parade.

"Are you a soldier, Erich?"

"No, why?"

"Because of the boots."

"They were my father's." Erich looked sadly in the dark. "He was killed last year at Verdun."

As soon as his boots were on the girl's feet Erich shouldered her rucksack, and started to drag her up the mountain. The raw flesh of her heels burned like fire and the sharp edges of the granite rock were noticeable even through the strong soles. She thought constantly of Erich's bare feet, and kept asking him how he felt, but he would not answer. Pantingly, he made his way through the underbrush, trying to find even ground and natural steps. When they finally reached the summit, Jarni was stupefied. She no longer felt any pain, only drowsiness from utter exhaustion.

The huge logs were already burning, giving a strange restless life to the faces around it.

"I should bring you right up to Freya," said Erich but instead he dropped to the ground at a safe distance from the circle around the fire. "She would make a terrible row. You don't know her when she discovers any lack of discipline! You'd better try to stay in the background until she has forgotten about it."

He started to pull thorns out of his badly scratched feet. Jarni looked at them and hastily opened her canteen. She soaked a towel in the water and offered it to him.

"But that's your drinking water," he protested.

"It doesn't matter," smiled Jarni.

"It feels mighty good though. Thanks a lot." Jarni wrapped his feet in the towel to cool the bruises and Erich grinned with all the confusion her hands caused in him.

"I guess we better join the circle. They will soon start singing."

But he had waited too long. Before them stood Freya, blazing with anger.

"What are you doing there?"

"Erich gave me his boots because my feet were so sore. He climbed barefoot all the way up, and got terribly scratched. I tried to —— "

"You are wearing his boots?" cried Freya as if Jarni had said she was wearing Erich's trousers. "How can you?"

"You see, Sister Freya," stuttered Erich, "Jarni really could not walk in her own shoes. She should not have taken them off, but once she did her feet became terribly swollen."

The group around the fire began to sing.

"Take those boots off immediately," commanded Freya. "The shame you bring on me is beyond words."

She turned around, but came back once more.

"Don't you dare to join our circle," she hissed. "You are unworthy to sing the Fire Song."

Jarni started to unlace Erich's boots but in the middle of the job she suddenly stopped. She pressed her hands against her ears and tried to avoid hearing the words:

"Rise, oh flame, to praise the day,
Light the sky with blazing shine —
Flaming signal of our faith
From the mountains on the Rhine."

Erich did not know what she felt, he only knew of Freya's orders. In great haste he retrieved his footgear and ran toward the fire.

Jarni did not care. She lay on her face, her mind far removed from reality, her hands clutching roots and grass. The wild smell of soil, herb and animal carried her back to a day in her childhood, when the school teacher had narrated the life of Jeanne d'Arc. She had been a gifted teacher with an ability to make historical figures alive. Jarni had followed breathlessly the calvary of the French girl from merry childhood through the paralyzing realization of being a chosen vessel, to the end — forsaken and forlorn — as a martyr. It had shaken her so deeply that she had not been able to go home after school that day. She had run into the woods, wildly, blindly, wrought up and frenzied, until she stumbled. And there, lying on the ground, her face buried in the wild smelling soil, she had fought against fate. Not that Jarni thought of herself as predestined. She was far from comparing her own small life to that of the Saint. But she had, stronger than others, the gift of animation, and her impressionable mind had lived in minutes of great intensity through the slow suffocation of a chosen life. Torture and the stake did not frighten her; it had been the sudden realization that so much isolation was unbearable. With all her instincts she had fought against the eternal injustice of fate to excommunicate a human being from union with his fellow men by elevating him to the bleak desolation of unshareable wisdom.

She had finally found her way back home that day, and the dreamless sleep of childhood had erased the cruel revelation, but the wilderness of the mountain top and her exclusion from the celebrating crowd had revived in her mind the experience of a last loneliness. She sat up and without tears listened to the end of the Fire Song:

"Hear the vow of freedom's youth
Standing firm on hallowed ground:
We are Germans — blood and mind
Are in sacred kinship bound."

She saw couples hand in hand jump over the burning logs. She had longed to do that too, but she knew she never would. Her sister stepped from the circle and stood close to the leaping flames. Jarni could see her face flushed by excitement, her blue eyes shining in a fanatic glare. With a voice, high-pitched with emotion, she recited:

"Teutons are we
Sons of Nordic light
Harbingers of a new, a better world
Where we, the pure, the strong, the hard, will reign — "

Somehow uncle Franz came into Jarni's mind, her brother's dark features, and all she knew about the history of this Slavic province of Saxony. It seemed a little ridiculous to think that Freya should assume the right to call herself Nordic.

The tall soldier called "the knight" stepped to the fire, carrying under his arm, three large chunks of wood which he put to the ground. He raised both his arms high over his head in an exact imitation of a picture called "Lightprayer," that had to hang in the room of every true member of the Youth Movement. He was naked save for a short piece of bear skin draped around his hips.

He looked savage and prehistoric as he stretched his muscular body, the red flames painting wild patterns on his skin.

"I call you, Baldur," he cried in pure Saxon dialect over the fire. "You God of light, murdered by sly darkness. I burn for you all that is dark and sly in me." He bent down, took one of the wood chunks, and flung it into the pyre. Then, stretching again to his full height, he called on Thor, the god of thunder and storm, and burned for him all petty, soft, and lazy instincts, symbolized by another log. And for the third time he stretched his arms to the night sky and this time he invoked Wotan himself, burning for him cowardice, "the greatest evil that can befall a man." When he had ended he knelt before Freya, who pressed a wreath of oak leaves into his hair. Then she and the naked knight jumped over the fire and in the light of the flames Jarni saw that it was the bear skin from the Dallmann's piano bench he was wearing around his loins. An urge to laugh surged up in her, but there was also a sadness, a deep hollow feeling of disappointment. She realized that she had lost her sister's friendship as she had lost Jasper's years before, and that she would always be alone because she could not share their turgid world.

Amos and Justine Dallmann shared the religious convictions of most Germans of their class. They no longer believed in Christian dogmas, they never went to communion, and their attendance at church services was confined to the high holidays of Easter and Christmas. But they were far from being atheists. Socialists and Communists were atheists and it would have been vulgar to descend to their state of agnosticism. The God of the educated middle class was "an ever present spirit" somewhat vague in form and definition, but always at hand to protect the country, and to supply the comfortable feeling that there was some higher being one could appeal to as a witness for one's own probity and benevolence. Beyond this, religion played no part in their lives, because the natural human longing for glorification and devotion had been swallowed by the monarchy. The Kaiser had come to be the executor of God's will on earth, and the Protestant Germans felt that worship of the monarchy was worship of God. Every time the Kaiser started a decree with: "We, Wilhelm, by the Grace of God," his subjects were assured that to obey his command was to fulfill a sacrament, and that to be a good patriot meant to be a good Christian.

This merger of religion and patriotism did not however result in a deterioration of church routine. To be christened, confirmed, married and buried with the blessings of a pastor pertained to the hygiene of social life as much as a bath to the cleanliness of the body. That is why Jarni Dallmann had no chance to escape confirmation. She had no interest in religion, and was consequently without scruples or creed, but she knew that she had to swallow confirmation together with many other adverse and boring complements of education.

*

The first instruction class was nearly over when the pastor asked the group of boys and girls whether besides deciding upon a career they had decided upon an inner goal as well. There was the usual gamut of answers ranging from "good and pious" to "rich and powerful" while Jarni tried to find her own answer. It was the kind of question nobody had ever asked her before, and it seemed to her as if her whole future — the success or failure of her whole life — hinged on finding here and now the right definition. Fear to miss the proper formulation that would convey all she meant, made her so excited that her ears rang and her voice sounded choked, when she finally answered Dr. Funke's question.

"It is possession that makes dull and sluggish, proud.
If God in his right hand held all the truth,
And in his left eternal ever-stirring urge for truth
Though with the certainty of endless error,
With all humility I'd choose the left, and say:
'O Father give. The final truth is but for thee alone.'"

The pastor seemed startled by this unexpected answer. There was a short awkward silence and then he asked.

"What is your name?"

"Jarni Dallmann," bending her knees in the customary curtsy.

The name meant nothing to him. He was used to having children of families outside his congregation at the confirmation lessons.

"How do you happen to know this quotation?"

"I read the Disputes of Dissension," said Jarni, and blushed.

"You know more of Lessing by heart?"

Jarni, so proud of her treasures, never before displayed, nodded, and with a voice vibrant with emotion, she started the Fable of the Three Rings. When she had reached the epimyth:

"That everyone should heed the prompting
Of sympathy that's free from prejudice;
That everyone should strive with might and main
To prove the power of his ring with kindness,
Nobility, and ardent faith in God —"

her voice had acquired a fervor which brought tears to Dr. Funke's eyes. Silently he nodded to her after she ended, and continued the lesson.

When the class filed out, he held Jarni back.

"Shall we have a little talk?"

He opened the door to his study adjoining the classroom, and Jarni stepped into an atmosphere which would become the eternally recurring goal of her life: a desk loaded with handbooks and papers, shelves with books up to the ceiling, and the shadows of old trees behind large, curtainless windows.

"Won't you sit down, Jarni? This sofa here is very comfortable."

Jarni curtsied again and perched on the edge of the black horse-hair sofa.

"Do you like elephants?" Dr. Funke sat down in a swivel chair and pointed to his desk, where elephants of all sizes and materials stood scattered among the papers. "This one here is a beauty."

He lifted a bundle of straw with a stumpy tail.

"Children in Africa play with this kind and occasionally wipe their noses with it. Would you like it for both purposes?" He twirled the elephant in the air and it landed in Jarni's lap.

"He is lovely," she said gaily. "He has wonderful ears. I like him."

The pastor watched her smilingly.

"That's excellent. He will appreciate your friendship, and your laughter above all. — You know why I love elephants?"

Jarni instantly became serious, awaiting the teacher's explanation.

"They seem to thumb their noses at the world, always and without malice. Their trunks say 'Bah!' to fate. Did you ever notice that?"

That was too much for Jarni. Things and men had their assigned places and behaviors. No matter how liberal a reputation he had, Dr. Funke was nothing but another Lutheran parson — like Pastor Bellmann in Pine Hills who taught Sunday School. Every one of his words, that much Jarni had found out in ten years, had been directed to find hidden black spots in the children's souls, to extract careless answers which would justify threats and castigations. This elephant game, she felt, was only another method, but Jarni would not fall for it. The trap was too obvious. She stroked the rough surface of the straw elephant with tightly drawn lips.

Dr. Funke rummaged through his papers and found a filing card.

"You live out of town, Jarni? Why do you come to my classes?"

Straightforward questions brought Jarni back to familiar ground.

"I go to school in town, sir. Not far from here. And one of the girls in the Lyceum mentioned your name, sir. She said — "

She stopped blushingly, realizing that she could not possibly repeat what Lilli had said about Dr. Funke.

"Who said what?"

"Oh nothing," said Jarni squirming, "really nothing. Lilli only said she liked your lessons very much."

"Lilli Horn? You know her?"

"Yes, sir. She is two classes ahead of me. We meet in music class."

"Come now, what did Lilli tell you about me?"

"She said you were more independent, sir. Really, she said nothing, I mean — please, sir, she really did not say anything bad, sir." The pastor looked at her so expectantly that Jarni had to stammer on. "She didn't mean anything bad, sir, she only said something about having fun and that — that you were not a stuffed shirt." Jarni was on the verge of angry tears. Things like that could not be mentioned to teachers. It was not fair of him to insist.

"That was very kind of Lilli." Dr. Funke smiled. "There is a church in Pine Hill, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir," Jarni answered obediently, trembling at the next question, which was already under way.

"And why don't you go there for confirmation lessons?"

This time Jarni did not answer. In a flash she saw the web of the church spread over the country, parsons and pastors holding the threads in their hands, communicating to one another the sins and failures of their congregations.

"Are you thinking I will tattle on you?" asked the pastor in surprised amusement.

For the first time Jarni looked full and long in the man's face, and into his gray, calm eyes, which held hers kindly, encouragingly.

"Pastor Bellmann's sermons don't mean anything to me," said Jarni in an attempt to be brave. "I don't understand his dogmas and his directions for a good life, sir."

"Won't you drop that 'sir,' Jarni? I won't ask any more questions, and I am glad you are coming to my lessons."

He rose, a tall well-built man in his early fifties.

"If there are any questions you would like to ask, come back, Jarni. I shall always be happy to see you!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Only when she was home again did she notice that she had left the straw elephant behind.

Those were days when a nation was dying, but Jarni knew nothing about it. Her conversation with Dr. Funke was engraved in her memory, and she repeated each word longingly throughout the eon of an entire week. She took Lessing's books from the shelf. It was an old edition. Her grandmother, who had once owned the volumes, must have bought it from a second-hand dealer. "Ex libris Ephraim Posener — 1829" was written on the first page, a strange and unfamiliar name in the strange handwriting of a past century. But Jarni read without concentrating. What before had been her deepest, most stirring experience had suddenly become the lifeless abstractions of a dead period. She climbed up to her old seat in the birch tree, hidden in golden veils of autumn leaves. Her young body enjoyed as much as ever the wind-swept elasticity of the tree, and the independence of her position high above land, water, and men. But her heart did not care, and her eyes did not notice the wild beauty of the wandering clouds. They searched the roof tops of the city for the small, insignificant spire of St. John's church. She kept staring at it until night blotted it out. Slowly Jarni climbed down. For a moment her cheek touched the silky birchbark and without knowing it her heart bade farewell to childhood.

It was a harsh November that year and the schools closed because there were limits even to the use of peat. It did not work in school furnaces. Jarni hated these vacations. They filled her days with an unwanted freedom. Her mother was rarely home, serving at the railroad station where she distributed chicory coffee and oak leaf cigarettes to transient soldiers. Or she worked in the community kitchen because the food supply was too small to cook individual meals. The turnip broth was concocted in the schoolhouse and ladies of the community supervised the distribution. Most families ate their portions right there, but those who belonged to the "upper classes" carried their rations home in buckets. Amos Dallmann's time was spent with the local posse guarding railroad crossings against saboteurs, or with hauling peat from the river quay, where it arrived from the northern marshlands. He and Justine had given up speaking to each other. Their faces were prematurely wizened, and they suffered from tooth-trouble as a consequence of malnutrition. The immediate cause for this hostile silence was a one hundred pound bag of sugar. The hungry faces of her family had at last overcome Justine's patriotism, and she had entered into a conspiracy with several other women to buy sugar smuggled in from Holland. She secretly sold an heirloom to pay the usurious price, but in spite of all precautions the story leaked out and one day Amos Dallmann searched the basement and found the bag. Whether his wrath was genuinely patriotic or whether he was simply afraid of the law, is hard to decide. In any case he made his wife load the heavy bag in a cart and roll it to the office of the local food commissioner. Jarni helped her mother pull, and to the end of her days she could not forgive her father for making her pass the gloating neighbors lining the street, and for having to endure in silence the moral superiority of the petty official who urged her mother "to repent her deplorable action."

Since Freya and Jasper were gone, and the old maid had left for a place where she would receive better wages, the front rooms were closed and the whole house had acquired a haunted atmosphere that drove Jarni into the street.

One rainy November afternoon she was strolling aimlessly over the square in front of the king's palace when she saw a crowd gathered before the gate. Pushing her way through the groups of men, women, and children, Jarni came close enough to see a piece of note paper affixed with a thumbtack to the century-old oak boards. A soldier in a torn coat sang drunkenly, beating the measure with a beer bottle, while everyone joined in:

"Mr. Wilson be so kind,
Send through Monsieur Clemenceau
For August just a whisky pint
For Wilhelm dear a portmanteau."

He repeated the rhyme again and again until it became a wild, insane din. There was something frightening in these yells and shouts, and Jarni sneaked out as fast as she had come, making her way along a rarely used alley. She came upon an open gate in the palace wall. She could not remember having ever seen it unlocked. Curiously she stopped, peeping into the backyard of the King's castle and was nearly run over by a large black limousine driving through the gate. The men inside the car were the King of Saxony and his equerry, and following her instructions, Jarni stepped from the sidewalk in order to make a deep curtsy. The King looked at her with bloodshot eyes but he did not seem to see her. He did not even wear a hat, and his big, red moon face looked sad and bewildered. The gate stayed open after the car had left; no one came to close it. Jarni rushed home, humming the soldier's song to a tune she invented, and pondering over the King's unfamiliar look of dejection. For weeks fragments of conversation had suggested an imminent end to the war, but peace had seemed improbable to her. Four and a half years of fighting had established war as a permanent institution, like hunger, peat and wooden soles. Their end was a dream, not a reality. What excited her were two startling experiences, magnified by the drab monotony of her life: a solitary, and therefore quite personal meeting with the King, and her first encounter with the masses, violent, noisy and powerful, which until then had never penetrated the barriers of her social consciousness. She was burning to speak about it and share her observations, and since she had no friends, there was no one else but her parents.

After she had finished her report at the supper table she looked expectantly at her father. She was proud of her experiences and she expected appreciation. But his head was bowed deeply over his plate; Jarni could see nothing but his sparse white hair. Her mother gave her a quick cautioning glance, but Jarni was tired of this eternally reprimanding look, and forgetting her manners she started to hum the song of the masses again: "Mr. Wilson, be so kind — " She only got to "Monsieur Clemenceau." Her father pushed back his chair, walked up to Jarni, and slapped her in the face.

"Get out!" he roared. "Get out of here!"

Numbed by pain and shock, Jarni got up and went to the door, and with a last startled look she saw two tears roll down her father's cheeks. This slap in the face marked the end of the first World War, of her country's monarchy, and of Jarni's inner relationship to her parents. She did not resent being slapped at the age of fifteen. Children remained children longer at this time and were treated in the traditional manner. What hurt her beyond the physical pain was the brutal, unexplained rejection of her willingness to share her experiences. After this ninth of November 1918 there would be no more attempts at understanding on her part. The break, hidden so long under every child's instinctive want for shelter, food, and education, had become overt, and was soon to drive her away.

Peace came, ungreeted and unwanted, taking from the middle classes the soothing consolation of martyrdom for a patriotic cause, and adding to the burden of poverty the venom of open class hatred. For Jarni it meant one more thwarted hope.

"When peace comes — " had been the great hope underlying all efforts to sustain a life that otherwise seemed utterly senseless. "When peace comes — " had been the promise of the elders when once in a while they realized how burdened and joyless were the days of their children. It had made moldy bread edible, cold rooms warm, and it had prevented suppressed laughter from turning into acrimony. And now that the miracle had occurred the adults would not accept it. Jarni did not care for her father's hissed remarks about traitors and gangsters, for the streams of tears with which her mother accompanied Kaiser and King on their inglorious flight to other countries. It was peace — and Jarni wanted her share.

While she lay sleepless, wondering broodingly whether all her life would have to be spent in this atmosphere of bitterness and frustration, she heard a whistle under her window. It was a signal the Dallmann children had used in their childhood to warn each other of approaching danger. Jarni ran to the window.

"Freya?" she called, "Freya, are you back?"

The prospect of having her sister back in the deserted house was exciting. But the black shape in the darkness was that of a man, and realizing Jasper's return, Jarni sobered down. She lighted a candle and went to open the front door.

"Welcome home, Jasper!" She tried to sound pleased, but there was no answer. Jasper's haggard face was unshaven and scratched, one eye swollen, discolored as from a blow, and the other glittering with fear and hate.

"Quick, let me in! They're after me!" He slipped through the door and closed it hurriedly. "Lock it."

"But, Jasper, we never lock the front door at night. I don't even know where the key is." Jarni was perplexed by his strange behavior.

"You go and find it. I won't move from this spot until the house is locked."

He leaned his full weight against the door as if bracing himself against enormous pressure from outside.

"I'll wake mother and ask her for a key," suggested Jarni, glad for an excuse to get away from his menacing face. But her brother caught her wrist.

"Don't wake anybody. The light and noise will attract them. Find the key yourself, and hurry."

"But what is the matter? Who's after you? Did you do something that you have to hide?"

"Shut your stupid mouth." The tone was familiar. "Do what I tell you."

Jarni looked at him without moving. All the scrapes she had saved him from when they were children, the lies she had invented to cover his blunders, the stolen candies they had shared, the long bedtime stories she had made up for him, all that came back to her mind.

"Get your key yourself. I won't."

Jasper still stood against the door, a fearful haunted look in his eyes.

"Can't you see, you damned idiot, that the Spartacists are after me? Don't you see what they did to my uniform?"

His blouse showed holes where once epaulettes had covered the shoulders, and the right sleeve had been ripped in an attempt to tear off the two chevrons indicating Jasper's rank as a sub-lieutenant.

"Who did that?" asked Jarni.

"The Spartacists, I tell you. They were waiting at the station, the filthy dogs. As soon as the transport train pulled in, they stormed the cars, tearing off epaulettes and badges, and stealing the officers' daggers and swords. But we gave it to them, Harold and I. We fought them tooth and nail. If only I had had my gun. But that was the first thing we had to surrender. We finally got away, but now they are after us." He looked in panic at the solid old oak door. "Do you understand now, you silly goose?"

Wordlessly Jarni turned around and went for the key. When she returned after half an hour of unsuccessful rummaging through bureau drawers, she found Jasper fast asleep sitting with his back against the door. His mouth was open and she saw that two of his teeth had been knocked out, and for the only time in her life Jarni felt burning pity at her brother's plight. After she had helped him to bed she opened the front door. A harsh wind rustled through the elder bushes and bent the crowns of the old linden trees. Ragged clouds swept past a pale winter moon and from the river came the grinding sound of milling ice. It was a wild uproarious night, but man and his combats were far away.

While street battles and strikes rocked the country Jasper developed a pleurisy which kept him in bed but did not silence him. For hours he poured out his disappointment at not having been able to fight to the finish, lamenting in bitter tirades the untimely end of "this magnificent war," blaming the "red beasts" for treacherously "stabbing our unbroken army in the back." "Under cover of dark," as they romantically called it, Harold Dallmann, his cousin, would slip into the house, and what had been a monologue in the daytime would develop into a never-ending dialogue at night. Intoxicating each other with words, the cousins whispered cryptic suggestions and allusive remarks, repeating endlessly revengeful schemes and exaggerated war memories.

"I hold myself at your command, Lieutenant," Jasper would say, saluting in his bed, and clapping his bare heels together under the blanket. "You are my superior. I lower my sword in deepest reverence to an old soldier and hero."

"Thank you, sub-lieutenant," Harold would answer, in an indifferent voice. "But let us proceed to deeds. We must form a nucleus here, starting to mop up the local workers' and soldiers' councils. After I have seized their leader, I am sure I can get reinforcements from Berlin. And then — " there was a portentous pause, "and then we here shall be the center of national rebirth."

Harold Dallmann, unlike his brother Siegfried, had come back from the war a violent Nationalist. He had special reasons for regretting the end of his glory as an officer. He was mentally retarded, and had spent nearly all his school years in an institution for feeble-minded boys. While his mother had shown much kindness to him, his father had never overcome his hurt paternal pride and he had teased the boy incessantly in a thoughtless and loud manner. The smarting shame of being inferior had turned into savage brutality when Harold got into uniform. He was a wild soldier, careless, cruel, and heedless of danger, the right type for the last desperate fights of a lost war. The same craving for recognition that had driven his bookish cousin Jasper to carry bricks, drove him to daredevil feats and brought him quick promotion. By the time he was made a first lieutenant he had forgotten that he had once been a pupil in a school for the feeble-minded. It took the armistice and the socialist revolution to throw him back into his old misery. To escape dreary reality he went on playing at war, fostering a murderous hatred against those who lived for the maintenance of peace, and who blocked by democratic doctrines the return of the glorious days of lawlessness and rowdyism.

When the two cousins finally got tired of planning a national revolution, Jasper took a worn volume of Nietzsche's works from the table beside his bed, and read to Harold, who was incapable of understanding more than the bombastic sound.

"You, my brothers in war, shall be of those who seek new enemies. You shall love peace only as a means for new wars, and you shall love a short peace more than a long one. I don't advise you to work; I advise you to fight! You say, it is a good cause that sanctifies even war? I say, it is a good war that sanctifies every cause. War and carnage have accomplished more great things than love and charity."

One day Harold carried a box into Jasper's room. They locked the door but were unaware of Jarni, hiding on the balcony which was also accessible from her parents' bedroom. With the tender care of a jeweller who displays his treasures, Harold unwrapped an automatic rifle while Jasper's eyes shone with excitement.

"How did you get it?"

"I found it in the arsenal," said Harold with a grin. "Isn't she a beauty?"

Jasper looked at the older boy with deep admiration.

"You risk everything for the cause," he said. "But we'll use it. Wait until I'm well, and I'll prove that I'm worthy of your confidence."

The box was closed again, wrapped in nondescript brown paper, and stored under Jasper's bed. There it stood until Jarni read that only one more week was granted to former members of the armed forces to turn in army property. After that there would be jail sentences.

When Jarni showed Jasper the notice, he turned white.

"How did you know?" he whispered. "You dirty spy! How did you know about the rifle?"

Jarni smiled contemptuously.

"Never mind," she said. "Are you getting rid of it or not?"

"Don't you realize that we need it to fight back, and to regain what those proletarian beasts have stolen from us?" cried Jasper.

"They're no beasts," said Jarni. "They are right. They were hungry long enough."

Jasper gave her a venomous look.

"I would smack you if it were not for your natural stupidity as a woman. You keep your fingers off that gun or you'll regret it."

"All right," said Jarni, "but I'll see to it that father knows about the things hidden in his house."

That was enough to make Jasper yield.

"I'll get even with you for this some day, just see if I don't!"

Winter dragged on, and there was no peace. The armistice merely carried the fighting from the trenches into the cities. Harold Dallmann disappeared, joining the illegal organizations which fought Communists in Upper Silesia and the Baltic States. It added heavily to Jasper's bitterness that the verdicts of his doctor and his father prevented him from going with his cousin. As time passed, Amos Dallmann, the good patriot, felt less violent about the Socialist rulers than his wife. It was his character to make peace with every element that gave promise of stability.

He was tired, he wanted law, order, and above all, a continuation of his work as an engineer. Outrageous hatred against the new masters was as repulsive to him as the unleashed fury of the mob. When the new government offered him a contract for the reconstruction of railway bridges, he was won over. He did not want this new source of income and satisfaction endangered by the foolish adventures of his son. He expected Jasper to go to a university, and to lead an unobtrusive and respectable life. But he had no authority with his son. Without the help of the doctor, who declared that the condition of Jasper's lungs was still serious, he would not have been able to prevent him from joining the Free Corps. Knowingly as well as instinctively Justine had focused Jasper's attention on herself alone. Her recognition of his efforts toward heroism, and their common contempt for the republic, had strengthened this tie.

During his convalescence Jasper had plunged into the study of history. He fed on everything from Tacitus' *Germania* to Bismarck's *Thoughts and Memories.* There was no escape from his discourses and recitations as long as the coal shortage lasted and family life centered around the kitchen stove. He was reading Fichte's *Lectures to the German Nation* one night in February.

"To have character and be Germanic is doubtlessly identical. Only the German language is genuine language —"

Two sudden explosions close by made the windows rattle.

"I must go." Jasper jumped up. "I must join."

"Join whom?" asked Amos.

"How can you ask? The day of reckoning has come. Now I'll fight!" With a short hiss the gas lamp was extinguished, leaving the kitchen pitch dark.

"It's another strike; don't you get mixed up in that!" Father fumbled for matches and the carbide lantern. "You don't even know who's fighting."

Jasper looked at him contemptuously.

"You would talk that way! This has been planned for a long time. We are fighting — we, the spirit of the old army!"

"Don't be such a fool!" Amos had unusual firmness in his voice. "You don't even have a gun."

Jasper slumped down in a chair.

"Yes, you're right, I have not even a gun." He looked fiercely at Jarni. "I once had one, but — you — " he jumped up again waving his fist in Jarni's face, "you have cheated me out of it. You — "

Amos looked helplessly at the ugly scene between his children.

"What do you mean by 'you — you'? Can't you talk nicely to your sister?"

"Sister?" Jasper gave a short dry laugh. "She my sister!"

Someone had knocked at the window. With a long leap Jasper reached the door leading to the storeroom.

"They are coming after me, father," he whispered, his voice hoarse with horror. "Try to hold them off until I have gathered enough bottles and boxes to sell my life as dearly as possible."

He disappeared, and with a pallid face Amos opened the door a little. But it was only a neighbor, an old lady who had come to share the news and borrow a candle. She looked apprehensively toward the storeroom. Crates were moved with rasping sounds on the stone floor and pushed against the door.

"Who's in there?"

"Don't be afraid," Jarni shouted as if the old lady were stone deaf. "It is only Jasper, preparing for a last stand."

"A last stand?"

"Yes!" cried Jarni, loudly enough for Jasper to hear. "He is sure the seizure of the gas works is only a diversion by the Communists to hide their actual purpose of seizing Jasper Dallmann."

"But that is dreadful," whispered the old lady, falling trembling into a chair. A new detonation resounded. But this time it was no shot. It was the outside door of the storeroom which had been slammed shut by Jasper as he left the house.

Justine had quieted the old lady's nerves with a glass of juniper wine. She took the book Jasper had flung to the floor.

"Jarni, my child," she said in the resigned tone which had replaced the former crispness of her voice. "Will you please go on reading? We need it. It will help us to concentrate our minds on ideals greater than our daily worries."

And Jarni read. With tired and unwilling eyes she groped her way through Fichte's labyrinthine definitions of nationalism.

"It is a dreary disguise of selfishness — this feeble handling of the reins of government. Foreign words call it liberté, fraternité, humanité, but honest German language calls it indulgence and life without dignity."

Jarni stopped. No, she felt, no, I can't read that. It is a lie, it destroys what I have loved and admired in history.

"Go on, Jarni," said Justine. "Read on. These are comforting words."

"A new national education of the German people must destroy at the roots freedom of will and create a severe pattern of decision; must make it impossible to act differently so that the state may rest in complete assurance of this will and its actions."

This program, conceived in 1807, was not to be realized for 126 years to come, but Jarni Dallmann's unwarped mind felt the depravity of its message. For the second time she flung Fichte's *Lectures* on the table but this time no one noticed it. With their heads leaning against each other, mother and the old lady had fallen asleep, their faces sheepishly blank and empty in the relentless white light of the carbide flame. Her father was engrossed to the point of hypnosis in scribbling on the edge of a newspaper. When Jarni leaned over his shoulder to see what he was doing, she recognized the bold span of the North Sea Canal Bridge, the greatest and most highly praised accomplishment of his career. These were the people she had to live with, her family — her only human contact, she thought bitterly. She had to get out of here, get out before her mind suffocated. Amos Dallmann did not even turn his head when she left the room.

Neither local trains nor streetcars were running that night but constant traffic strikes had brought back many a horse and buggy. It was on one of the milk wagons that Jarni got a ride to town. By the time she rang Dr. Funke's bell the clock in the spire was striking eleven and an unfriendly elderly woman opened the door.

"I want to talk to the parson," Jarni said with a faltering voice. She suddenly realized the oddity of this visit.

"The parson does not receive anyone at night. Who is sending you?"

"No one. I must talk to him myself."

"Why?"

There was a cold curiosity in these hard eyes.

"It is very urgent, you see," Jarni said with the sudden fluency of fear. "The parson gave me some work, some very special work, in the last confirmation lesson. I promised I would be down tonight to show it to him. The streetcar strike — "

"Don't you know what time it is?" The woman was unimpressed by Jarni's elaborate speech. "This is no hour for a young girl like you to be out. Come back tomorrow."

Jarni had tears in her eyes.

"But I must speak to him. Don't you see? I must!" and desperately she stamped her right foot on the ground. The woman gave her a look of speechless indignation, turned around and went away, leaving Jarni where she was without closing the door.

Dr. Funke stood in the hall as if he had been there all the time, listening to the conversation.

"Come in, Jarni." He opened the door to his study, and turning back to the woman, he said: "It's all right, Malvine. I was expecting Jarni Dallmann."

This lie, this wonderful lie, was like a present. For a second they looked into each other's eyes, and then the man said with a little smile:

"My wife is very much concerned about my nerves. She tries to keep all intruders away."

But Jarni, so young and untrained in the art of human contact, did not hear the apology.

"That wasn't Mrs. Funke?"

"Yes, Jarni, that was Mrs. Funke." And the way he said it was so final, so full of the pathetic solidarity of long years of marriage, that Jarni instantly realized the carelessness of her remark.

"You wanted to talk to me?"

But now that she had reached the goal she had struggled for so passionately her mind was blank and she seemed tonguetied. To hold the precious moments of his attention she grasped at what next came to her mind.

"Why is there no peace? Why did they steal it away from us?"

"Who stole your peace?"

"It is not my peace alone. It is the peace of all of us, of this country and of the world, but they can't see it. They go on plotting, bragging, abhorring — mother, Jasper, and the whole lot." Her voice became more and more violent. "They have cheated us out of the peace which was to be ours, and now I hate them, yes, I hate them!"

She was far from crying. The fullest measure of protest would always find her furious, not resigned.

"You don't hate them," he said peremptorily, "and you must never say that again."

For the fraction of a second Jarni felt a piercing disappointment that this should be all he had to offer as an answer.

"Why shouldn't I? They don't care for me," she said defiantly, jerking her head back. "They don't understand me. They never loved me, and I don't love them either."

Dr. Funke got up from his chair.

"Jarni," he said pleadingly, "you can't say that. If they cheated you out of your peace it is not their fault. The past bears more heavily on them than it does on you. You must love them very deeply in order to help them carry their burden."

"I can't lie," said Jarni, no longer defiant but with a feeling that she was guilty in his eyes. "I can't pretend love. I still hate them."

As if she had spoken a curse, the parson stepped quickly toward her, and his hands caught hers in a strong grip.

"Forget that word," he said menacingly. "God does not allow it, do you understand? God forbids you to hate." He was very close to Jarni now, his hands closing upon hers — a magic circle. Jarni looked up into his eyes and a thrill ran through her body.

"God?" she asked. "I don't know what God is."

"You will find him" said the man, in a quiet voice. "You must find him, Jarni, you could not live without him."

She could not bear the intensity of his eyes, and bowed her head, feeling for the eternity of a second his lips on her hair. When he let go of her hands he smiled a wise, compassionate smile.

"Poor Jarni," he said. "You have a peculiar gift. You want to hate, but your blood is so full of love. It will make you happier and much unhappier than all the others."

Jarni did not know what he meant.

"God?" she asked "If only I knew."

"You will, Jarni. One day you will know." He opened the door with the politeness of a man, not of a teacher. When he pressed her hand in a silent good-bye, she felt something thrust into it and she recognized the straw elephant.

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With a violence rare to the climate of central Europe spring broke loose and filled the air with the oppressing sweetness of foehn winds that swept down from the mountains. There was no improvement in the labor situation and Jarni had to walk to school whenever a new strike was proclaimed. She wore leather boots now, heavy inelegant things, donated by American Quakers. But they were boots protecting her feet, and no one had ever taught her to consider questions of elegance. Her clothes were old, patched, and mended, and her body was incredibly thin. But she had become tough and proof against either hunger or fatigue. It was the dangerous gift war and revolution had bestowed upon her generation. They would go through life with a miraculous ability to adapt themselves to adverse conditions. Anyone at any other time or place would have been afraid of these dark journeys through a land torn by revolution. But the isolation of her childhood had left her fearless. She was safe because she did not know what danger was.

It was so dark that she did not see the river embankment when she walked home one night. The lights of the city, a mile behind her, were blotted out by a sky so low that she stooped under its weight. The air was sultry for a spring day and Jarni was tired, her cotton dress clinging to her body with dank perspiration. She finally had to sit down on one of the old stone seats upon which washerwomen and hawksters had once rested their heavy baskets. Vainly and miserably she looked into the dark, pondering whether to cross the meadows to the highway half a mile inland in the hope of getting a ride in a car, when a terrific stroke of lightning split the darkness. And then came the storm. Wind, rain, and thunder merged in unleashed fury, lighted by the crisscross of incessant flashes. Jarni knew the danger of the river meadows during a storm. She flung herself on the ground, braced against the granite wall of the stone seat. The stifling heat had disappeared, and her body was washed by floods of pure rain. Her hair, first ruffled by the storm, was soon molded to her head, and her thirsty lips drank the waves of water rushing over her face. It was an insane uproar and Jarni gave herself to it. She stared at the dazzling light, the thunder beating down on her, the storm trying to push her into chaos.

"God!" she whispered, and she closed her eyes in expectation of His appearance, but it was the parson whose image she felt emerging from the flood around her. Never had he been so close to her and never had she heard his voice so commandingly clear:

"You could not live without me."

She tried to hold his closeness, but with the abating storm it vanished in the dark.

At her next confirmation lesson she went to Dr. Funke's desk without the timidity she had felt before.

"May I talk to you later, sir?"

Again she stood in the study which had come to be the mooring of her life. Not quite two months had passed since her last visit, but Jarni was changed. She thought she had solved one of the problems piled up like a barrier between her and the enjoyment of life. It was her first victory and it gave her a new boldness and a first touch of adult sincerity.

"How is the straw elephant?" joked the parson. "Did he take good care of you or you of him?"

But Jarni did not smile back. Her eyes were fixed on a copy of da Vinci's "Last Supper" hanging opposite the desk. Dr. Funke, leaning against the window, followed Jarni's eyes.

"The picture of a great sacrifice," he said. "The sacrifice of hating one's enemies."

Jarni knew that he had not forgotten. She turned around, clenched her fists in an attempt to hold her own against the power of persuasion, and said with the unswerving absoluteness of her fifteen years:

"I know all about God."

The man in the window smiled, and in his heart pity and envy blended with admiration. There was no trace of irony in his voice when he asked:

"And did you find Him?"

"No," said Jarni with a defiant jerk of her head. "There is no God to be found. It is the biological power of all organic matter that drives me. My living organism responds to love and hatred and good and evil. I have no separate soul to respond to a separate God. Spirit or God or whatever you call it, it exists only because I do. It is dependent upon this body for its existence. I know it now; there is no metaphysical power."

She turned around, suddenly ashamed of having confessed her creed, and huddled in a corner of the sofa.

In the long silence that followed the man in the window was caught between two impulses. After Jarni's other visit he had resolved to stem his growing affection by avoiding any personal contact with her. But her confession had swept this resolve away. It had awakened the theologist in him who felt the burning obligation to win and hold her within his world. The phenomenon of a young person being a dissident without having gone through the usual struggle between rationalism and emotion, and without the cynicism of social disappointment, had cast into his sensitive mind the first anticipation of a new spiritual order that was alien to him. He was a rebel within his creed, having discarded centuries of obsolete dogmas, but the existence of an Absolute Power, independent of man and his beliefs, and the possibility of personal contact with this power on the highest level of mental concentration, were the foundations on which his life had been built. Effortlessly he had withstood the attacks of materialists, but he was deeply disturbed by this child he loved. For the sake of his peace, and for her salvation from a spiritual self-reliance that could not stand up against the tests of reality, he had to convince her.

"You have felt it," he said encouragingly as he sat down beside her. "You have experienced within you the power that is God. Now it is a question of finding a personal approach."

But Jarni Dallmann would not accept this assuagement.

"No single being can approach personally the energy that creates life. No one is important enough for that."

"Yes, Jarni, yes! The desire for protection and devotion is born with every human being, and so is the urge for prayer, ever recurrent since the beginning of mankind. This is the proof of the coexistence of God and man."

"Prayer is fear," said Jarni. "It is petition, and therefore senseless."

"But that's where you don't follow me," pleaded the pastor. "Prayer as I mean it is not petition. It is grateful acknowledgment of an order independent of purely materialistic causes and consequences; and it is an ever renewed pledge to use the power of discrimination, embedded in us by this higher order, for the promotion of good and the suppression of evil. No one can live a positive life without the reassurance of this spiritual tie. The responsibility for mankind's plight is too great to be born unshared."

"There is no other way," said Jarni with the fearlessness that seemed to be innate in her. "Everyone is responsible to all."

For a moment Dr. Funke looked helplessly in the face of the young girl, and then with a sudden impulse he took her hands in his.

"Let me pray with you, I beg of you, Jarni. Let me teach you how to pray."

With the touch of his hands the magic circle closed again. His eyes seemed to go through her with a hypnotic strength that blotted out her rebellious thoughts, and she nodded willingly.

"We shall pray, Jarni. Listen, feel, and join me as soon as your mind is ready.

"I want to mirror you in every thought
And never shall I be too old, too weak
To hold your mighty symbol in my heart.
I see you manifested, powerful
In man's creative immortality.
I see you where the poor, the weak, the mad
Crawl helpless in the dark of earthly bonds.
In loving them rewardless, hating none,
I try to serve you in humility.
My fate still rests behind your mighty brow
But what you give I shall accept in faith,
In faith of love — love that is you — is God."

With her eyes closed Jarni drank in the sound of his words and for the first time she understood love and knew what her life had been lacking. In his voice there was the tenderness of persuasion with which a good mother makes learning light; his hands en-closing hers were strong and assuring like a father's, and there were waves of tension carrying in the deepest channels of her substance a new experience of sweetness and pain.

Did he speak? Had he ended? Was it a prayer or a song? Jarni did not know and did not care. To hold this knowledge of love was all that mattered.

When she felt his hands releasing their hold on hers she repeated as if to remember the magic formula that had created their union: "Love that is you, is God."

Deeply touched, Dr. Funke stroked the girl's hair and his face reflected a victory. The power of the Good Shepherd in him had brought a life back to the haven in which he felt all human existence should seek its safety.

Freya Dallmann's return from war duty had nothing of the dramatic pathos of Jasper's flight from Spartacist persecution. Her haunted spirit was veiled by a determination that made her appear much older than her years. She was no longer pretty, though her hair still had its beautiful richness and color. Her cheeks were too thin with deep hollows in the temples, and her mouth, that always had seemed a little too small in proportion to the rest of her face, was contracted by grim resoluteness. The manner in which she took over the Dallmann household from the first day of her return convinced everyone that here was a woman who had matured under the strain of war duty into a rather mannish officer to whom the whole of life was a base hospital that had to be managed with efficiency and discipline. Justine Dallmann, after the first weeks of relief from household duties, disliked seeing the executive power pass into the hands of her daughter, and soon the air was thick with tension between the two women.

When it came to a showdown it was about food. Justine was not an accomplished housekeeper. Her training as a governess had not taught her much about cooking, and there were occasional accidents in the kitchen which neither Amos nor Jarni took seriously. But there was nothing Freya would not take seriously, and it embittered her to the point of hysteria to see foodstuffs wasted or health endangered by wrong selections. She had come back from the war an ardent vegetarian and a fanatic believer in the benefit of eating raw vegetables, and Justine's menu that night had for the second time in a week provided pork chops and mashed potatoes. The ensuing argument was long and tedious and ended with Justine leaving the battlefield to attend a political meeting. When she had gone, Freya threw herself on the sofa and burst into such a flood of tears that it frightened Jarni who sat at the table doing her home work. After some time her sobs turned into screams while her body jerked up and down and she bit her fists till blood ran over her hands. Her eyes were wide open, glassy and unconscious, and her face wet with perspiration.

"Freya," said Jarni rather helplessly. "Come Freya. Don't take it so hard."

But Freya did not hear. Her eyes were dry now but there was this horrible continuous screaming like the wailing of a siren. Then with the sound of a snapped string it stopped and a trickle of blood appeared in the corner of her mouth. She lay still now, her eyes closed, and her face that had been hot and red a few seconds before turned white. Jarni watched this strange change with fear and decided to get some cold water. She had not reached the door when she heard a heavy fall. Freya had rolled from the sofa and lay face down on the linoleum. Jarni turned her around and saw blood running from her nose. She wanted to bring her to bed but when she lifted Freya's head her sister grasped her right arm and held it between her hands as in a vise. Her face showed no sign of consciousness. It was as if all her life energy was in that painful undiminished grip. There was nothing Jarni could do. She shifted her body so that she sat propped up against the foot of the sofa, Freya's head resting sideways in her lap, her right arm paralyzed by the hold of two frantic hands.

The bleeding from Freya's nose had stopped and the blood had clotted in her hair and upon her skin. Jarni wanted desperately to get a wet rag and wash off the blood because the smeared face disgusted her. While she sat there, obsessed by the wish to get away, she suddenly realized that there was something unnatural in the way she felt. She knew she should love this suffering face, she should understand that her sister was holding on to her in a last frenzy of despair, and yet she could not help wishing that this had not happened and that Freya had kept her emotions to herself.

Finally the hold upon her arm was released. Freya opened her eyes but seemed too weak to move even her head.

"I'm sorry," she murmured. "I don't know what happened."

"Your nerves gave way, I guess," said Jarni. "How do you feel now?"

"Nerves? Nonsense!" Freya's voice regained its familiar tone.

"It was not nerves. I know what it was." She sat up. "It was the dirt, the debasement I had to get out of me. I have felt it coming for months." She held her hand over her stomach and looked with a haunted air at Jarni. "All the uncleanness of men, the filth they talk and do accumulated in here. Everytime one of them touched me with lecherous hands or looked at me with greedy eyes, it sank into me and it poisoned me all over." Her face was very close to Jarni, fanatical and accusing with clotted blood and waxy pallor. "When I came home I thought I could forget, I could cleanse myself and become pure again as I had been before the war. But mother wouldn't understand. I begged her — I reminded her that it had been she who had first warned me of men. But she forced me to eat corpses polluted by the agony of slaughter and the foul touch of sadistic butchers." She covered her face with her hands and started to weep softly.

Jarni had only a very vague idea what Freya was talking about. She had not the slightest objection to eating meat, and she had never thought of service in a war hospital as debasement. But these were points not to be argued now. It was important only that Freya should not scream again.

"There must have been other men," she said encouragingly. "Not all of the soldiers you took care of can have been so dirty."

"They were, all of them," insisted Freya, her face still covered by her hands. She made a long pause and then, taking her hands from her face and holding them folded before her chest as if in adoration, she said:

"One was different, one man of all the thousands. One day he will call me. His time is not yet here but when it comes he will go through the country as a leader and redeemer. And I will be at his side."

"What is his name?" asked Jarni relieved by the change in her sister's voice, and curious to know who could be her lover.

"Lamberty," said Freya, and though it sounded like a mere nickname Jarni did not ask any further questions.

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Jarni's confirmation was over. Instead of the Apostolic Dogma required by the Lutheran Church she had pronounced a special credo written by Dr. Funke to meet her objections against a confession to the Trinity. She took the Communion with cherry juice instead of wine in a special goblet to avoid any resemblance to the symbolical transformation of wine into the blood of Christ; and she recited Nietzsche's "To God the Unknown" instead of a Bible quotation at the final examination. But these concessions actually meant nothing to her. They were problems which she had carefully created in order to provide new opportunities to speak to Dr. Funke. He attacked these problems in a spirit of affection that he expressed in wise and diligent discussion. He gave her one red rose after the communion, and his hand trembled when he held the goblet to her mouth, but he never took her hand again and he never again sat beside her on the horsehair sofa.

With the coming of summer they went for long walks in the woods or through the river meadows. They did not discuss God again. With the instinct of a good educator the parson knew that further argument would endanger the gains of that night of united prayer. He read to her Goethe, Meister Eckhart, and St. Thomas. Gradually the unreal light of mysticism carried the young girl into the older man's world which he had built in conscious detachment from the political unrest around him. Like many highly cultivated Germans of his time, he used the training of his exquisite mind to escape a reality whose problems aroused no responsibility in him.

They rested under oak trees which stood on a small hill, an island, surrounded by a rolling ocean of ripe wheat. There was a monument standing on the knoll, a Greek warrior's helmet, finely chiselled from native sandstone resting on a granite base.

"Jean-Victor-Marie Moreau
General
1763 - 1813"

read the inscription. The silent presence of Napoleon's dead general gave the place a nostalgic melancholy. Dr. Funke leaned against an old tree looking over the golden abundance of the field and down at the young girl, dreamily stretched out in the soft grass.

"I wanted to ask a favor of you, Jarni. The group of men and women I am leading here in town are to participate in a mass meeting of all progressive Christian forces on the Wartburg. We plan an outdoor performance of the last act of 'Faust' in the court of the castle, and we need a young woman to play Gretchen."

"You mean — you would allow me to go with you — to play Gretchen? Oh, Doctor Funke — "

She jumped up and threw her arms around his neck. She felt his breath, his hands lifting her body from the ground, and for the fraction of a heart-beat she felt his lips — the first man's lips to touch her mouth. A gigantic wave of passion carried her on, but before it had reached its climax the man had already thrown her hands from his shoulders with a violence that hurt, and his voice, breathless with selfrestraint, said:

"I asked a favor of you, Jarni. It is I who would have to thank you. Don't you understand — ?"

And then in despairing agony: "Don't touch me again, Jarni. Never! God, why did you do that?"

His eyes seemed dark with an inner struggle that restored to him the fury and wildness of youth. Jarni stared into the fascinating beauty of this new face.

"I understand," she said and it was all clear to her — all that she had been waiting for, that she had wanted more than life itself, and that now would never come. And perhaps she anticipated dimly how heavily this non-fulfillment would bear on all her future love and how it would make her careless and resigned. For she turned around and cried.

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A strange mixture of groups met on the Wartburg that fall of 1920 to decide the future of Germany's spiritual life. The "Christian Freedom" and "Free People's Church" movements represented progressive protestantism. They had met to reach an understanding about the rising influence of Marxism and Dialectic Materialism. University fraternities and the German National Youth Association had come to renew the pledge of the old "Burschenschaften" for a national rebirth, made on the same spot in 1817, and to organize opposition against the internationalism of the Socialist republic. The independent youth movements with many groups and sub-groups called for a restatement of their initial aims of freedom, truthfulness, and responsibility in a world of post-war looseness, and for incorporation of liberal Christian principles into their program. Common to all participants in this rodeo of creeds were lack of money and obsession by an idea. They did not notice the frugality of the food cooked in field kitchens, nor the utter primitiveness of their quarters. They all had come with burning hearts, a longing for clarity and release from chaos.

With the other women of Dr. Funke's group, Jarni was billeted in the upper story of a round watchtower near the Wartburg. The ancient structure had already been erected when the Prince of Thuringia kidnapped Martin Luther from the road beside the tower to translate the Bible for his people. The rough stone floor was covered with straw, and ladders led from one floor to the next. There were neither doors nor windows, and water for washing and drinking had to be carried from a brook in the adjoining woods. When Jarni lifted her face from the creek, half-blinded by the ice-cold water, she heard a voice say: "Isn't that the little girl with the sore feet?" and she looked into the face of the boy who had once lent her his boots and had dragged her up the mountain to the unfortunate solstice celebration two summers ago. "Do you still remember me?"

He had changed considerably. His bony frame had broadened and his face, though still affable and open, was that of a man.

"You bet," said Jarni wiping her face. "You were awfully good to me that day. — Are you at the congress?"

"Yes and no," said Erich, dipping his comb in the water and combing his hair. "We had a meeting in Weimar last week. A few friends and I heard about the Saints and Saviours meeting here and we thought we might drop in and throw a few stink bombs."

He spoke fluently and with the pointed sarcasm of a trained agitator.

"Who met in Weimar?" asked Jarni uncertain whether Erich was speaking seriously.

"The Proletarian Youth. What a meeting! It was a little different from the hymn-singing and sermon-preaching up here. We gave it to them — plenty — before we quit."

"Quit, why?"

"We went along for some time with the Socialist Youth. We thought they might wake up to things. But when they agreed to that rubbish called the Weimar Constitution we had enough. No socialization of industry, no confiscation of land, no abolishment of army pensions. Just Sunday school, nice and neat and proper, to please Daddy Ebert and Uncle Noske. The devil!" And he spat into the brook.

Jarni did not know what to answer. She knew nothing about socialism or communism and she was irked by Erich's aggressiveness. At the same time she was fascinated by the dogmatism with which he talked.

"Are you here with Freya?" Erich picked up Jarni's rucksack as he had done two years ago and started towards the tower.

"O no," said Jarni. "I never belonged to her group. You know how little I fitted in at that solstice celebration. I am here with Dr. Funke and the Christian Freedom people."

"Christian and Freedom — what a combination! Eyewash for the naïve," Erich decided with a final sweep of his hand. "You are all ostriches afraid to realize that only one force now has a right to decide and to rule."

"What force?"

"The workers — the proletariat. Compared to their struggle everything else is obsolete and ridiculous."

Workers — proletariat: abstract ideas without physical reality for Jarni. Erich's explosive remarks were like tracer bullets in the dark, giving her the first glimpses of a political world that had existed only at the outer edge of her consciousness.

Doctor Funke's exquisite representation of Pater Marianus in the Faust performance filled Jarni with a pain that overshadowed her own part completely. Numbly she spoke her lines, waiting frantically for a glimpse of consolation and hope from his eyes.

"All that is mortal is but a symbol — " her voice rang in the final choir. "The indescribable now is event — " Pater Marianus had to lift his head to hers.

"Eternal womanhood is what restores us!" rang the closing line. But his eyes were veiled with tears and his mouth old with abysmal resignation. When they left the stage together, he turned away from her, his head bowed.

That night she sat on the flat roof of the ancient watchtower staring into the clear night sky. She tried to give up what had sustained her for a year high above her accustomed world of tension and controversy — the hope of loving and of being loved without inner reservation. God, prayer, the wisdom of great men — for her sixteen-year old heart it all had been a means, a way, and it had lost its sense without the ultimate goal to be loved.

There had been voices on the lawn below but Jarni had paid no attention. Now she recognized Erich, delivering a lecture to an unseen and hardly audible audience. Still unspoiled by the abstractions of orthodox Marxism, he mixed the harassing picture of suppression and exploitation, of child labor, slum dwelling, and industrial accidents, with materialistic dialectics and the theory of surplus value. The contrast between Dr. Funke's belief in mankind's inescapable, pre-determined destiny and Erich's insistence that environment decided man's plight struck Jarni like a gust of icy wind and stirred in her the urge to fight and protest. Social injustice merged with the injustice done to her heart, and she listened to Erich's words hungry for a new hope.

When the main meeting in the huge Hall of the Knights started the next evening, she sat beside Dr. Funke as had been planned but for the first time her heart stayed mute in his presence and her head was whirling with a new intellectual excitement.

"I acknowledge gratefully the confidence which has made me chairman of this momentous meeting," said Dr. Funke, gazing upon the two thousand representatives of practically every creed and conviction among German youth. "I have taken the liberty to alter the program in one respect. It so happens that the leader of one of the most far-reaching youth movements of the last year is among us. He and his followers have conquered the whole land of Thuringia in a victorious drive. In his leadership I see elements that will turn the wheel of history a hundred years ahead. I ask you to listen to Lamberty."

While Jarni still pondered why this name sounded familiar to her, the doors of the hall were flung open and twenty-five young men and women marched down the aisle. It was the New Link, a group of former elementary school teachers, artisans, and released soldiers, who had swept through middle Germany with the explosive force of medieval revivalists. The first man carried a pole with a small blue flag, then followed a band of musicians with violin, flute, and guitars, playing the challenging tune of a Luther hymn. Lamberty, the leader, came next, striding in splendid isolation, and in the first row of the rank and file behind him marched Freya Dallmann, wearing like all girls in the group a wreath of daisies in her braided hair, a blue frock of rough homespun linen, and sandals on bare feet. The surprise was so great that Jarni was only half aware of the powerful chorus of the audience:

A mighty fortress is our God—

She stared at Freya who in spite of her strange garb had never looked so lovely. For a second their eyes met, and Freya smiled at Jarni, softly, sweetly, full of a deep victorious pride.

Lamberty had mounted the rostrum. He was a tall bony man with a red complexion tanned by outdoor life. His blond hair was unusually long, touching the collar of his open blue shirt. He had a strong protruding nose; his mouth was large, his teeth huge. The strange disharmony of his face came from a low receding forehead with two humps above sharp eyes; it gave his profile a decidedly equine expression. He started to speak and this is what the new leader of the youth movement said to a gathering of spiritual forces, rallied to plan salvation for a defeated Germany.

"Brothers and Sisters!

Awake! Rouse yourselves! Join the revolution of the soul! We want to take you in our arms and whirl with you till you are carried away by the vibrations of eternity. God has shown us His face. That is why we believe in the eternal victory of the good over the rotten stinking pool that is our society. Don't be deceived. Students are drunkards, writers are gangsters, politicians are swine; but the young-nature has risen against the old-nature and the living divine man will fight against the venal rabble that lives for a purpose and not for a destiny. Look at the doctors, scientists, lawyers, teachers. They have a profession but they have no soul and their brains are putrefying sores. They are the real paupers of life because they don't possess what alone would make them valid members of the folk community: obsession by a creed. I have come to you as a living preacher to save you from the slow deadly poison of intellect and reason. If you ask who has sent me, I could only answer that God sent me. I feel myself appointed by the grace of God."

He had spoken in an even, solemn voice that had the persuasive power of one inspired. Now he made a pause, his eyes closed and his strange bony face listening to a confirmation of his inner calling. Then suddenly he banged his fist on the rostrum as if awakening only now to a realization of the depravity of his audience. Pointing his finger to a row of elderly pastors and professors in front of him, he cried:

"You and you and you. You poison God's clean air by tobacco and your own divine body by alcohol. You debase your wife to the state of a whore because you sleep with her out of lust and not for the sole sacred purpose of creating a new image of God." There was dead silence in the huge room as if all the two thousand people had been whipped. The old pastors looked guiltily into their laps.

"You call yourself Germans and you have forgotten what folk, land, and the deep holy connection with soil and tradition mean. You dress in foreign fashions, you smear your faces with stinking cosmetics, you teach in Latin and French. And there, outside —" his hand pointed toward the huge Norman window openings and his voice broke in tears, "is your people starving, wanting, questing." Once more he closed his eyes, and then abandoning screaming accusation for biting menace, he concluded:

"But I have come to check and to change. I don't care whether you want me or not. Don't be mistaken. It is a higher power that decides my presence, not you. The people do not choose a leader, but the leader chooses a people. The leader does not need the people in order to be a leader, but the people need a leader to fulfill their divine mission. Don't search in the dead books of the cold intellects, the moderns, and the Jews. Get away from the filth called civilization, from figures and technique. Delve deep into the depths of your soul. Feel that you are called upon by God to obey a new command, and you will become standard bearers of a new order that will lead our people out of the disaster of 1918!"

The roar of the last words resounded through the hall and stunned the audience for a moment. Then tumult broke loose. The members of the different youth movements surged forward to get hold of Lamberty, to press his hands, to touch his clothes and to get a glimpse of his eyes. The student corporations stayed at their seats and so did the German National Youth. They disliked the mystic note in the speaker's address, but his reference to folkdom, Jews, and "the disaster of 1918" met their own aims, and many of them stamped their feet on the stone floor as a sign of appreciation. The liberal Protestants seemed to be divided. Many of the older pastors and professors shook their heads in open disapproval, but the young people and Dr. Funke were deeply impressed.

"His formulations are still obscure and undisciplined," he said to Jarni who stared puzzled and silent at the milling crowd. "He needs schooling and intellectual training. But the impetus, the initial ideas are great and of immense importance. Germany has lost all established moral and economic standards, and for a decade to come will be impoverished and exploited by enemies. In this situation a new creed of spiritualism and purity is a God-given program."

"But what does he actually mean, what does he intend to do?" asked Jarni uneasily. Thinking about Lamberty's speech gave her a feeling of physical discomfort as if she were entangled in a cluster of slippery vines.

"That will be evident later," said Dr. Funke. "The main thing is that he has religion in the deepest unorthodox sense, a natural relationship to God that enables him to unite all confessions behind his program."

There had been pushing and milling around Lamberty and soon there was a scuffle between those forming a ring around the new leader and a group of about ten men trying to occupy the rostrum. Erich was among them. His face was red and furious and his jaws set. He finally reached Lamberty and stood beside him, facing the audience.

"Lamberty addressed the young people in this meeting, and so will I," Erich shouted without bothering about permission to speak or about an introduction by the chairman. Dr. Funke got up from his chair. His face was irritated. He did not intend to tolerate such lack of formality. But Erich spoke rapidly paying no attention to the pounding of Dr. Funke's gavel.

"I know I am not officially admitted here," he said, "and I won't bother you long. What you have just heard is the perverted utterance of one who is either an imbecile or an impostor, the results of stupendous megalomania mixed with religious hysteria. We, the working youth of Germany, protest against mysticism as a means of obscuring the real issues of economic exploitation, suppression of freedom, and social reaction." Dr. Funke's gavel came down again, violently and angrily, but Erich did not stop.

"I ask all of you who know that their fate lies not with slimy priests and irresponsible freaks, but with the peasants and workmen, who want to think and act on the basis of Karl Marx's manifesto of social justice, and who value 1918 not as a disaster but as a victory, to leave this meeting in protest."

There was the same uproar as before but hissing and booing were clearly predominant. Jarni got up, eyeing Dr. Funke, who was looking on with a contemptuous and distant air. He turned his head towards her and his eyes darkened with restrained emotion as they had that day when she had flung her arms around his neck. With a quick clamping move he covered her hand. Erich and less than a hundred young men and women were fighting their way toward the exit. With a voice that sounded distant and cold, Jarni heard herself say: "I must go." And she thrust off Dr. Funke's protecting grip.

The State of Thuringia turned over its ancient castle Leuchtenburg to Lamberty and his New Link. For a while the protests of the local population against alleged immorality were dismissed as hypocrisy and black reaction. When finally two children were born at the castle, and each mother claimed that it was she who had brought forth the New Messiah, the authorities had to investigate and were confronted with a bizarre case of sexual hysteria. Young girls and older women were struggling for the leader's attention, granted or withheld with tyrannical brutality. But it was the Saviour's frank admission that he considered fowl, grain, and fruit, gathered by his followers in nightly raids upon nearby farms, as a just tithe due him from those he had come to teach, that brought him into court. With his conviction for theft, one more ideal of Germany's war generation had been destroyed, and there was nothing to replace it. Disillusioned apostles returned to the bleak scene of economic struggle either as cynics or fanatical Communists. When Freya Dallmann left the courtroom she had only one aim left in life: to destroy the Republic that had deprived her of the one God she had believed in.

VIII. War In Masquerade

"Please sit down," said the Baron, pointing to one of the big leather chairs standing around the fire-place. Jasper Dallmann clicked his heels and obeyed nervously. The late hour and the worried face of his host forecast bad news.

"Take a vodka?" The Baron filled two glasses of half-pint size with the water-clear liquid.

"Thank you, I don't drink," said Jasper.

"And you don't smoke either, isn't that so?" The Baron had emptied his glass in one draught.

"No, I don't smoke." Jasper's tone condemned everyone not sharing in his abstinence.

"But your comrades make up for what you miss," grinned the Baron, stuffing a long meerschaum pipe and settling back in a corner of the leather sofa. "The devil knows, you Germans are a strange lot. Always either saints or sinners. Can't you relax and just be normal?"

He did not seem to expect an answer. He puffed large blue clouds into the air, which had not yet been warmed by the freshly kindled fire. His wrinkled, weather-beaten face looked pensive and worried. He was a haggard, stooped man of about sixty. Despite his shapeless, pea-green hunting suit and mud-caked boots, he looked aristocratic. Jasper, watching him closely with apprehensive eyes, concluded that it was the long, beautifully shaped hands, and two lines of supercilious arrogance, from the wings of his nose to his mouth, that gave this impression.

"You may be surprised that I haven't asked your cousin, the commander of the detachment, to come over tonight. But honestly, I can't talk to him. I never lose the feeling in his presence that he'll jump at my throat or pull a gun, or the devil knows what. He is a wild mustang, isn't he?"

"First Lieutenant Dallmann is a great soldier," said Jasper reprovingly, "I am sure, Baron, you haven't forgotten the part he played in the attack on Riga last March. If it were not for him the capital of Latvia might still be in the hands of the Bolshevists."

"Maybe — who knows?" said the Baron cryptically, looking at the smoke of his pipe. "Maybe he's a good soldier. But everything at its proper time. The war is over now, isn't it?" He looked at Jasper, his cold grey eyes urging him to acknowledge a fact that seemed obvious enough in November 1920.

Jasper saw the trap and kept silent. To confirm the Baron's statement would be an admission that he and his comrades had no right to remain in the Baltic states; it would make them intruders instead of defenders. The Baron looked at the young man coolly. His faded breeches were worn threadbare on the knees; his high laced boots were down at the heels, and the blouse of khaki cloth much too thin for a winter in eastern Europe.

"I don't want to give you the impression that I do not appreciate what the Baltic Fighters did for our ravaged country. But as I told you already, enough is enough. There are considerations which are stronger than sentimental gratitude."

He slapped his hand on his knee and filled his glass again.

"I don't understand," said Jasper. "We are expecting to hear any day now from Captain Ehrhardt where to go next. I am sure you don't mean to withdraw your hospitality before these orders have arrived?"

"I shall have to if your orders don't arrive by tomorrow morning. I just came back from Riga. The developments of the last twenty-four hours don't permit any doubts as to who is master in Latvia."

"It seems impossible that President Needra should have changed his generous and understanding attitude towards the Baltic Fighters." Jasper grew more uneasy every minute.

"He hasn't. Certainly he hasn't," said the Baron with angry satisfaction. "But that's just the point. He is no longer in Riga. He is on his way to Sweden." He got up and planted himself in front of Jasper. "Ulmanis is back. Do you understand what that means? And this time he has plenty of English and French money and unlimited military support, should he encounter resistance."

Ulmanis had been the first national president, elected by the Latvians and supported by the Allies, after the Treaty of Versailles had granted Latvia independence from Russian sovereignty. He had been overthrown when German military intervention seemed the only means of saving the land- and money-owning aristocracy of German stock from the Bolshevists. Needra, his successor, was a tool of the barons and free-corps leaders, and only his regime had made the prolonged presence of the Baltic Fighters possible. The news of his abdication spelled grave trouble for the German element in Latvia.

"Ulmanis had all of us in the town hall this morning," continued the Baron, pouring himself another vodka. "It was late in the afternoon before he was through with what he had to tell us."

"And what was his program?" asked Jasper, inquiring reluctantly about his own doom.

"Mr. Ulmanis has graciously consented to leave me, out of my fifty thousand acres, guess how much?" The Baron stared into the fire, his face red with wrath. "Eight hundred acres, do you hear, eight hundred acres of the land my family has worked for five hundred and sixty years."

"And the rest? What is he going to do with all that land?"

"Mr. Ulmanis will give it to his noble friends. Every Juris and Janis and Matis and Karlis will set his muddy feet on my pastures, my fields, my woodland; and a brainless Slavic rabble will undo what German intelligence and culture have built up in half a millennium."

Big tears were rolling down his sunken cheeks and he had forgotten about his pipe which dangled dead and cold from his left hand.

"And we, I mean the Baltic Fighters, what did Mr. Ulmanis decide about us?"

"That's just the point," groaned the Baron. "It's damned blackmail. A landowner housing any of you after the next twelve hours will lose even the shabby bit of land granted to him by this Livonian pig."

For a moment Jasper was too shocked to speak, but then his eyes sparkled in hatred and fanaticism.

"You are not going to stand all that, Baron?" he said tensely. "You are going to fight him, of course. You are a German knight. You could not surrender to your former serfs." He got up from his chair saluting the slumped figure with clicking heels. "I offer you the unflinching loyalty of myself and my comrades. Our weapons and our lives are at your disposal. We expect your orders to defend the sacred soil of your forefathers to the last man."

The Baron gave him a sadly ironical look.

"In Heaven's name, drop those big words. They don't mean a thing. This is no longer playing at being a soldier. It is reality. Ulmanis is not a Bolshevist who can be chased away. He is a Latvian, a man of the people, and he has the support of the people if you can bestow such a title on this unwashed and unlearned scum. There is nothing we can do. You'll have to leave."

"But Baron!" Jasper's voice was sharp with contempt and hidden fear. "After the conquest of Riga, you and your friends promised us land in return for our services. The Baltic Fighters were to be allotted land in Livonia or Courland. That was a solemn promise, an obligation you can't neglect."

"Ask Mr. Ulmanis about it," was all the Baron said. "He has our land. Maybe he'll give it to you."

"But what will become of us if we have to leave? We can't return to a Socialist Germany without being jailed. The order of the Reichsregime in the fall to return at once to our regiments has been disobeyed by all of us."

"My friends and I have talked that over," said the Baron, visibly relieved at Jasper's admission that he could remain no longer in the country. "We have decided to ask General Awalow, the leader of the White Russians, to take you into the ranks of his army. I'll provide horses and supplies to see you through the three days it will take to reach Awalow's army at the eastern border." The Baron got up from his chair with a sigh of relief. "What do you say now? Isn't that a grand proposition?"

"But we are Germans. We could not possibly fight under Russian command."

"And why not?" The Baron hooked his thumbs in the armholes of his suede vest. "It seems to me that men of your convictions would be much better off under a White Russian militarist than under a German Social Democrat."

"And what if General Awalow is defeated by Trotzky?" asked Jasper furiously. "Do you expect us to be shot by the Reds to pay for the defeats of a totally incapable Russian general?"

"But who speaks of being shot?" asked the Baron, dismissing the possibility as utterly ridiculous. "If you should see that Awalow is slipping you can always get away in time."

"He is slipping already," said Jasper contemptuously. "And where do you suppose I could go?"

For a moment the Baron was stumped, but the prospect of losing the remainder of his land by retaining the freebooters accelerated his usually slow mental processes.

"To Switzerland for instance — Zurich or Lucerne. It's a beautiful country, the land of milk and Cahier chocolate." He became quite enthusiastic in a desperate attempt to rid himself of the dangerous liberators. "You don't want to join Awalow? All right — all right. The decision is up to you and I would be the last one to forget services rendered to my country. I'll show you that I am a man to keep faith." He went hurriedly to his desk, opened a drawer and took out a checkbook. "I'll give you a new start in Switzerland and I'll not be stingy either. Here —" he pressed a check into Jasper's hand. "Five hundred Swiss Franken, quite a sacrifice for the poor man I am now. But it'll show you that I'm your friend." He caught up from the leather sofa a hunk of mashed felt that once had been a hat and slapped it on his head. "I shall get in touch with the Swiss consul in Riga. He's my friend, he'll give you a visa. And tomorrow morning at 6:30 two cars will bring you and your comrades to the station to catch the eight o'clock express. Good night!"

The Baron had spoken so hurriedly that Jasper hadn't had a chance to interrupt. When the door shut he still stood in the stiff military posture in which he had offered the Baron his life. Now suddenly he realized the futility of this pose and slumped down in the chair beside the fire. There was some satisfaction in having thwarted the Baron's attempt to sell him and the others as mercenaries to Awalow. But everything else seemed hopeless. He stared at the check in his hand and tried to realize what this escape would mean. Pictures of the Alps, of deep blue lakes, fat herds, and green pastures came before his mind. But they were only pictures taken from milk cans and chocolate wrappers; they did not represent anything real. He tried to feel the contrast between life in the peaceful prosperity of a neutral nation and the haunted existence in the eternal European war zone. For a moment he longed for the tranquility, the beauty, and the productiveness implied in the word Switzerland. But when he tried to picture himself a citizen of another nation he knew he would never go. The alluring charm of Switzerland was blotted out by all he had experienced in the twenty years of his life: famine, heroic agony, lost dreams, and the ghastly atrocities of civil war — all that Germany had meant to him and his generation. And a raging desire to finish what he had accepted as his task flooded his heart. He had pledged himself to help reconstruct the Germany of his boyhood vision, the Holy Roman Empire. He could never be an emigrant, never be a traitor to this destiny. He had to live and die a German, no matter whether the great mother would accept or condemn him. It was this passion — deep and genuine, and pathetically independent of his political and philosophical misconceptions — that distinguished Jasper Dallmann from many a hoodlum among his co-fighters.

He tore the Baron's check in half and left it on the desk.

Through the gales and blizzards of December Jasper and

Harold Dallmann started a long and weary journey home. They had neither money nor provisions, and they passed through hostile country where in six hundred years of German oppression peasants and workers had come to hate the very sound of the German language. They slept in hay stacks and underbrush, and they went hungry for days when the German settlements happened to be far apart. But their hardships did not sober them. It intoxicated them with a belligerent mysticism, a patriotic martyrdom, that fed on memories of German settlers in the Middle Ages. Jasper and Harold Dallmann's bitter retreat became the retreat of the German knights after their defeat in 1410. In lofty and bombastic conversations they transformed themselves into Ullrich von Jungingen and Heinrich von Plauen, and like the defeated leaders of the Holy Order, they vowed to come back and to wrest Livonia from the Slavs.

With frozen toes and half-starved bodies they reached the estate of a friend in East Prussia late in January. It was not until March that they recovered sufficiently to join Captain Ehrhardt's reorganized Brigade that had been chosen for the attack on Berlin and the liberation of the capital from the Socialist yoke. The smarting disappointment of the Baltic adventure had wrought deeply in Jasper's soul. All his hopes had centered upon the land promised by the barons. Without admitting it to himself he was tired of the roving, marauding life of a free-corps soldier. The heritage of many generations of land-owning, settled middle-class men was still alive in him. He wanted to build up something that would confirm him as a useful member of the community outside the boundaries of a Socialist republic; and he had welcomed the idea of settling in the Baltic States. Although he joined in all the preparations for the seizure of Berlin under the political leadership of Kapp, he never quite overcame the paralyzing effect of this shattered dream of owning and working land. His blind enthusiasm was gone.

After strenuous night marches through Prussia, Captain Ehrhardt's Brigade arrived at the army camp of Doeberitz on a cold night in March. For the first time since the Peace of Versailles freebooters were received like regular soldiers. Through the betrayal of General von Luettwitz, who had sworn an oath of allegiance to the Socialist republic, the barracks of the Doeberitz camp were opened to Captain Ehrhardt's troops. It did not matter to the Reichswehr general that they had been declared illegal by the government. He provided the outlaws with food and shelter, paid for by a people who had fought and bled to attain freedom from the military dictatorship of the old army.

In the grey dawn of the thirteenth of March Captain Ehrhardt's officers were sitting around an iron stove in one of the buildings having breakfast, when Harold Dallmann burst into the room. There had been little talk. The action that lay ahead was like a huge shadow cast over them, but now the tension broke in a cross-fire of questions. Harold had been to Berlin in civilian clothes to deliver final instructions to Kapp's and Ehrhardt's followers.

"It's all right," he said breathlessly. "It's all settled. Jagow, Ludendorff, Estorff, Lettow-Vorbeck, they are all for us, wholeheartedly."

"And what about Seeckt?" asked Jasper. He admired the man who had been his commander during his brief career as a regular soldier.

"He's a traitor if ever there was one!" sneered Harold. "He and Reinhardt have joined with the socialists. He has not only given orders to arrest all members of the Brigade. No, that was not enough to show his loyalty to harnessmaker Ebert. He has answered allusions about possible insurrection with an order: 'Shoot at the first sign of rebellion!' "

"But why?" one of the lieutenants asked. "He's an old officer. He must see that only brute force can rid Germany of the Reds?"

"Here is what he sees." Harold threw a leaflet on the table. It was an appeal to the regular troops to remain loyal to their legally elected government.

"Lawlessness, bloodshed, and violence will settle nothing," the paper read. "Those inciting you to civil war have proved themselves unworthy of the Prussian army tradition of discipline and obedience. They have forfeited the right to call themselves Germans. It does not matter whether or not you agree with the political program of our government. Soldiers are not politicians, they are defenders of their people."

There was fury and contempt among the followers of Captain Ehrhardt, and many a boisterous threat of bloody revenge was voiced by a youngster trembling at the consequences of the next twelve hours. Jasper Dallmann did not participate. He beckoned his cousin outside, and, standing in the harsh morning air, he said:

"I'm not going to Berlin with you. I'm quitting."

"You are crazy! It's four-thirty now. At five o'clock we are supposed to march. That's no time to change your mind."

Anxiously Harold looked at his cousin's stern and strained face. Through the last three years he had come to see in him his sole guide and leader. There had been no decision, no opinion of his that had not been shaped by Jasper. He could not understand what now made him talk like a fool.

"You go back," said Jasper in a low voice. "Keep them talking as long as possible. I'll leave everything behind except my automatic gun and a few personal papers. I'll march lighter that way. By the time the commander has found out about my absence I'll be out of the camp."

"But why? For God's sake tell me why you are doing this?" asked Harold more depressed than infuriated.

Jasper gave his tall broad-shouldered cousin a look in which pity was blended with scorn.

"I don't think you can understand me, pal. Seeckt was too much for me. I just don't like civil wars any more."

"But remember what we went through together, remember Riga!" Harold tried desperately to hold Jasper. He could not imagine going into a fight without him. Jasper interrupted him with a vigorous slap on the back.

"Bolshevists and Livonians were something different. To-day we're fighting our own people. And there's something else, Harold. I just can't forfeit the right to call myself a German." He raised his right arm in the salute of the Brigade and vanished in the thick hovering mists.

Jarni's visits to the parsonage had become rare. She had written to Dr. Funke explaining that school work and home lessons kept her too busy for outside activities, but she knew it was a lie. That had been in the fall and it was now the last day of February when she knocked at Dr. Funke's door to return books she had kept for over two years. Everything was as it had been before — the peaceful serenity of the study, the herd of elephants roaming through papers and books on the desk, and the man in the window niche, his face half-hidden by the shadows of an early winter evening. While Jarni stammered excuses for her belated return of his property, she realized that Erich and his ideals had eclipsed most of the gentle light of this love. It was a shock far deeper than the loss of this hour; it was her first realization of the evanescence of life.

"Won't you sit down?" said the pastor. He opened a drawer of his desk and took out a book which he handed to Jarni. "It should have been a birthday present for you. Now it is too late even for a Christmas gift."

It was a rare edition of Goethe's *Faust,* bound in soft gray leather, with Jarni's initials printed in gold in the lower right corner.

"It's beautiful." Jarni's hands caressed the soft surface of the precious book, and for the last time there was the mysterious merging, the deep probing into each other's eyes.

"I'm glad you like it. I hope you will not dismiss the book after you have dismissed the donor." He took her hand and with a light touch of his lips kissed it.

Jarni bowed her head with a feeling of guilt.

"Don't do that." And, withdrawing her hand, she repeated: "Don't do that. You don't know —"

"I know, Jarni." And then with a lighter tone: "You are not even looking at the motto I wrote in the book."

Jarni opened the volume and read the two key lines:

"Who'er aspires unweariedly
Is not beyond redemption."

She remembered what an inspiration these words had once been to her, but as she closed the book her eyes fell on the Communist Manifesto she had put on the table when she reached for Dr. Funke's present and she knew that she no longer understood their meaning.

"There is no redemption," she said with the same conviction with which she once had said: "I know all about God." "The only endeavor worth the effort is to better our social plight. Man is his own redeemer."

The pastor took the Manifesto, opened its cover, and his eyes fell on Erich's dedication: "To my comrade, Jarni Dallmann." Jarni blushed, and with the defiance of an absurdly bad conscience she continued:

"You of course hate Marx, but for me, I mean for my generation, he means everything. He is our new religion."

Dr. Funke's face was grave now.

"Don't sell your faith as lightly as that, Jarni. Your right to choose your faith is your freedom, and this freedom will be your religion. You learned early to hate the fetters of the old caste system. But this," his knuckles struck the pamphlet angrily, "this is a new, a much more paralyzing dictatorship of a chosen caste. True, they will abolish the economic imperiousness of a privileged class but with it they will evict freedom of learning, freedom of doubt, freedom of artistic creation, and of personal conviction.

They will evict the freedom of being responsible for one's own destiny, and that price is too high."

"Too high?" Jarni gasped. She had been sufficiently imbued with Erich's ideals to act exactly like him at the first sign of opposition. "Too high," she repeated, "for freeing nine-tenths of the population from a wage system which merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence, driving children into mills and mines, making fathers paupers, and mothers the common object of capitalistic prostitution?" It was a literal quotation of Marx's text and the parson seemed amused.

"Jarni, you forget that this Manifesto was written in 1847. These things are no longer true, and their remnants will vanish fast, now that we have a Socialist state."

"We do not have a Socialist state — not yet," she protested. "There are still too many bourgeois left in the government." And adopting again Marx's text: "But he — the bourgeois — furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie."

"And even if he would, even if there were sufficient unanimity among the workers as a class to eliminate the bourgeoisie, what then?" asked the parson, now as aggressive as Jarni. "There would be a dictatorship of the state, not even of the proletariat, as your friends believe. Exploitation by a merciless mass production system, political murder disguised as traitor trials, the imbecility of spiritual regimentation, everything would be justified by the policy of the party and the law of the State. It would destroy the huge mental reservoir of the middle-class, which since the Renaissance has produced every genius, good or evil — Michelangelo, Napoleon, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky.

"That's a lie," said Jarni rudely. "The proletariat has geniuses who will outshine all past performance of the bourgeois once they are given the opportunity of education. Policy of the party, law of the State?" She again quoted Marx. "Law, morality, religion are to the proletarian —"

"— so many bourgeois prejudices," concluded Dr. Funke, arousing in Jarni an impulsive anger at his intimate knowledge of the Manifesto which she had come to consider her and her friends' property.

"Of course, you can't admit that Marx is right," she attacked. "It would invalidate your prayers and reduce your noble saints and classics to an absurdity. But we are finished with all that." She got up from her place on the horse-hair sofa. "We will build the state of tomorrow, the workers' and the peasants' state without you!"

"But you, Jarni, are neither a proletarian nor a farmer, don't forget that. It would be a tragic mistake if you considered yourself as one of them. They won't accept you, and you'll be desperately alone."

"They have already accepted me," said Jarni coldly. "Don't forget that they are not the snobs of middle-class society."

She caught up the Manifesto and with an offensive obviousness left the copy of Goethe's *Faust* on the table.

The parson's face looked old, worn by the strain of many defeats.

"I wish you would wait before joining their ranks," he said wearily. "You are too young to understand the trap."

But Jarni was not aware of the note of apprehension. She only felt his reproof.

"We have no time to squander, none of us." And like young Sebastian Dallmann more than a hundred years earlier she added with the cruelty of all youth: "It takes a young mind to understand what we're fighting for."

One strike followed another and buses, street cars, and trains were idle for months at a time. During the long winter open pleasure boats, run by a private company, were the only means of transportation between the city and Pine Hill. But Jarni did not mind the dark rides in snow and rain on the upper deck of an asthmatic steam boat as long as Erich was at her side. It was a new school of life where her craving for learning and understanding was stilled by his temperamental explanations of Communist doctrine.

Twice she had managed plausible excuses at home to attend meetings of the Young Communist League which excited her by an atmosphere of unrestrained rebellion and intellectual superiority over the older generation. It was after the second of these meetings that Erich, saying good-night, took her with sudden vehemence in his arms and kissed her. His were the violent, clumsy embraces of a very young man, torn between physical desire and fear, and they left Jarni's lips bleeding and sore. But her senses responded to his rough manliness. Through the medium of her affection she accepted the social doctrines he believed in, as before she had accepted Dr. Funke's transcendentalism through the medium of his love.

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After he had severed his connections with Captain Ehrhardt, Jasper Dallmann enrolled at a university. But a dismantled machine gun he had kept in a closet aroused his landlady's suspicion and brought an investigation by the political police. A verdict of guilty for detaining state property, and participation in illegal activities, would mean expulsion from the university and the vanishing of all hopes for a normal career. In this dilemma Justine remembered her brother Andreas, and she had no scruples in asking for his intervention on behalf of her son. From conversations at home Jarni learned that Andreas von Neel was her uncle, but she never found out how the renowned member of the Socialist government reacted to this rather impudent request, since her mother refused to answer questions on the subject. Jasper was put on probation and was permitted to continue his studies, but the trial had created so much excitement that no one thought of asking Jarni where she had spent the day when she sneaked back into the house on the first of May, 1921. Next morning she was summoned before the school principal.

The atmosphere of parchmental dignity was so oppressing that she bent her knees in a curtsy as soon as she stood before his desk. There was no second chair in the room, indicating that all culprits had to stand before their judge. The man at the desk continued to write, taking no notice of Jarni. She was used to being treated like that by superiors, but this time it infuriated her. She turned around, about to leave the room, when the principal said in a sharp voice:

"Where are you going?"

Jarni turned around. "I didn't want to disturb you, sir."

"You will kindly let me decide when it is time to talk to you," said the man in a cutting voice. "You are Jarni Dallmann?"

"Yes, sir." She caught herself just in time as she was about to make another curtsy.

"Where did you spend your Sunday?"

"Outdoors, sir."

The first question had shown Jarni why she was here, and she was now weighing in her mind the possible consequences of telling the truth.

"Where outdoors?"

"On the old parade ground, sir." Jarni had made her decision. This was the opportunity to get school over with.

"How interesting! Wasn't a political demonstration under way there?"

"No, sir, it was a May 1 celebration."

"What fine distinctions! And who was celebrating there?"

"The Communist Youth League, sir."

"And what were you doing?"

"I sang in the choir and distributed handbills, sir."

"These handbills?"

The principal held a leaflet in his hand. A notice was clipped over the upper part of the text: "Distributed by Jarni Dallmann, Class B 6; at the parade ground, May 1st." It was signed: Luise Mallmer. Jarni did not answer the principal's last question, she was too busy hating Miss Mallmer, the gymnastics teacher. The physical exercises practiced in her class were ridiculous imitations of the Prussian parade ground drill, and her harangues on "Nordic beauty," "the glorious duty of propagation," and "the supremacy of the strong over the degenerate" with which the elderly spinster accompanied her lessons had bored Jarni to exhaustion.

"You deny having distributed these bills?" asked the principal hopefully.

"Oh no, sir," said Jarni. "I could not contradict Miss Mallmer."

The open irony in Jarni's tone upset the man for a second. But then he broke loose:

"Are you not ashamed of having been present at a gathering of the scum of the city? You dare to disgrace our unhappy nation by joining up with the mob, yelling for the destruction of our most sacred traditions, and abusing God by the most abhorrent blasphemy?"

"And wasn't Miss Mallmer ashamed of having joined the scum of the nation?" returned Jarni. "She must have been there to get the handbill."

The pale face of the principal grew a shade paler before it flushed with a wave of fury.

"I was willing to talk to you as a good shepherd to a misguided sheep." He pounded the desk with his fist. "But you are hopeless. Every word would be wasted on your brazen impudence. I shall advise your parents to withdraw you from this institution to spare them, mind my words, to spare them and not you, the disgrace of seeing you expelled!" He fell back in exhaustion, and, covering his eyes with his hand, he murmured, "You may go."

Jarni went back to her class, where a history lesson was under way. With a feeling of great triumph she packed her bag.

"What are you doing?" asked the teacher, a gentle old man.

"I have been expelled," Jarni replied cheerfully. "You'll have to excuse me."

"Expelled?" repeated the old man in horror. "But why?"

The heads of thirty girls turned toward Jarni, who was now ready to go.

"For being a Communist!"

She did not go home. She went to the Technical College to get hold of Erich between lectures. She felt like a soldier who has waged his first battle, proudly showing off her expulsion as if it were a citation for gallantry. But Erich did not share her feelings.

"What are you going to tell your people?"

"The truth, of course."

"They might throw you out," warned Erich. He was a war orphan and knew the hardships of an unsupported youth.

"But that's exactly what I hope. I can get work in a factory."

"In a factory, you?" Erich smiled scornfully. "With your looks and your hands you couldn't work in a factory."

"Why not? What is wrong with my hands?" said Jarni. She was hurt and disappointed. "They are as good as the hands of other factory girls. What is different about me?" It was the one question she shouldn't have asked.

"That's just it," said Erich. "You're different. You are no mill hand, and I wish you would never become one." And with a look of love and desire he concluded: "You are made for other purposes."

There was nothing less welcome to Jarni at this moment than this tribute. On her way from the Lyceum to the Technical College she had transformed herself into one of the millions of working people, fighting for liberty, equality, fraternity. She had joined their ranks as a comrade, secure and accepted in the realm of the proletarian class struggle, one with their aims and with Erich's ideals. She wanted to become a useful link in this iron chain of class solidarity.

"But Erich, work is all I want." He had to see how sincere she was. "I'm sick and tired of living in empty space, not being part of my own group, and separated from party problems by bourgeois standards. I am young and healthy. I have no right being supported without contributing work. I want to understand the world you live in. You will help me get a place in the photographic factory, won't you?"

"You had only eight more months in school," said the boy wincing. "They will take you back if you talk sensibly to your old man. There will be plenty of time for work and political activity after you are through with school."

Jarni swallowed hard, tears welling up. "Go back after all I have told the principal? Ask my father's help? You must be crazy, Erich. Can't you see that I'm through with them, that there is no way back? I'm only going home to tell them the truth. After that I must find work in a factory or a mill. That's all there's to it."

The determination in her voice conquered Erich. When she met him next morning he told her that he had recommended her to the foreman of a plant which manufactured photographic films.

It was a pitiful scene when Jarni told her parents about her expulsion from school and her decision to become a factory worker. The attrition of the war years had left strong marks on their characters. Neither Amos nor Justine risked an argument. They only sobbed and sighed in abysmal disappointment, realizing that they would lose Jarni for good if they opposed her decision.

She now worked nine hours a day in a windowless room with green lights, making two folds in a tin-foil package of films, passing before her on a conveyor belt. There were slight setbacks in her enthusiasm for the life of a factory girl and the great proletarian union — the scornful laughter of the other workers when her forefingers began to bleed and she had to work with bandages that made her clumsy; her unsuccessful attempts to start conversations with the girls who giggled at her way of talking; lunch hour, when she unwrapped a jar with lettuce, a bottle of fruit juice, and toasted whole wheat bread, which Justine, unwillingly but full of hidden apprehension for Jarni's health, had prepared. Factory workers lived on chunks of bread, raw bacon, coffee, and home-made cake. Anything else was ridiculous. But all these humiliations were forgotten when at the end of the day she passed through the gate. A number of men were waiting for the girls and Jarni would go off with Erich exactly like all the others, arm in arm, the lunch pail dangling from her free hand — Erich and Jarni, two young workers, indistinguishable from the anonymous army of the proletariat. That was when she was happy, when the wild craving for being accepted in a group was stilled, when the vacuum between her and her fellow men had finally been filled.

There were violent kisses and embraces between Jarni and Erich, but when he asked her one night for a final union, she balked.

"I am not yet ready for it, Erich. I wish you would understand me. I love you, but I cannot marry yet."

"Who is talking of marriage? Oh Jarni, you are still such a bourgeois. Can't you cleanse your system of this old rubbish? You love me and I love you. So why wait? After all I'm only human."

But Jarni could not give herself up. When they saw each other the next time there was a trace of fatigue in Erich's kiss, and with his love her carefully constructed world of proletarian equality started to crumble.

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She had fainted twice in the workroom, and the girls had teased her with hints of pregnancy. For days she had suffered from a violent headache, and nosebleeds spoiled the packages on the conveyor belt. The foreman, who was a close friend of Erich's, finally discharged her and Jarni's career as a worker was ended.

She was tired of life when she came home that night, too tired even to speak. Justine saw how ill she was, and nursed her with resignation and diligence through an attack of meningitis. In the long weeks of convalescence Jarni convinced herself that she could not go back to factory work. She finally understood that it was not only a question of health, or the failure to win acceptance in another class. It was the deadly stupidity of the work, the waste of brain and energy that had worn her out.

Erich did not visit her during her illness. Her heart cried out for a touch of tenderness and understanding during those long weeks when she faced her mother's suffering resignation and Freya's harsh righteousness, and her love seemed to grow in proportion to the time of separation. When she eventually was allowed to go out, her first trip was to the dormitory of the Technical College where Erich lived. But he was not there. A roommate told her that he was preparing a March of the Unemployed to the Ministry of Public Welfare to take place the next day.

She was early at the meeting place, hoping for a chance to talk to Erich. But the demonstrators were already two blocks deep, unwilling to permit a latecomer to push his way to the front lines.

"Hello, Erich." There was a lump in her throat, when she finally saw him.

"Hello, Jarni, what are you doing here? I thought you were sick."

"I was," said Jarni, trying to ignore the bitter news that he had known of her illness and never had visited her. "But I'm all right now. I didn't want to miss the demonstration."

"You? Oh no, Jarni, you can't march with us. This is only for the unemployed."

"But I'm unemployed, am I not?" smiled Jarni imploringly.

"This is strictly proletarian." Erich seemed a little embarrassed. "We don't want to mix classes on occasions like this. Our members might resent it."

"I thought there were no classes left?"

But Erich was not in a mood for discussion.

"And besides," he concluded impatiently, "this is not just another demonstration. This time we mean business. There may be a fight."

"I wouldn't mind," pleaded Jarni, knowing that her cause was already lost.

"So long," said Erich. "Excuse me, I am terribly busy."

He ran away, shouting commands and instructions. But when the procession started to move, he was out of sight at the helm of four thousand demonstrators, and no one was there to prevent Jarni from falling in with the last lines.

Her neighbor to the right was an old weather-beaten man in the dusty overalls of a bricklayer. At her left marched a young woman with a red bandanna over wheaten hair, demurely parted in the middle, and a ruddy, gentle face. Jarni paid no attention to them. While her feet followed mechanically the feet in front of her she tried to understand why she had lost Erich. She went back in her memory, carefully appraising his words and her reactions, but no matter how long she tried to evade it, she eventually had to face the fact that her refusal of complete union had destroyed their relationship. She was still debating the wisdom of her decision when she heard the old man at her right ask:

"What are they going to ask the minister anyway?"

Jarni was ashamed. She suddenly realized that by joining this demonstration she had followed Erich and not the banner of the revolution, and that her attitude was incompatible with proletarian discipline. She turned to the young woman at her left.

"Have the demands for the minister already been formulated?"

"I should say so," said the girl with a fascinating Russian accent. "Weren't you at the meeting last night?"

"No, I was ill," said Jarni, feeling more guilty. "Would you mind telling me and the comrade here the main points?"

"A fifty per cent increase in the dole for all members of the independent unions. Abolition of the state's enemies, the Christian Unionists. Immediate cancellation of all pensions to former professional army and navy officers and confiscation of the private property of all officers from the rank of Colonel upwards. But the chief demand is that the minister accept two members of the party as permanent assistants to supervise the future activities of the Ministry of Public Welfare."

"That's good." The old man put his forefinger deep into his mouth to shift his quid. "That's very good. Show this damned traitor of a Soci where pensions should go."

"And what if he doesn't accept these conditions? After all, the Communists are only a minority compared to the Social Democrats?" asked Jarni.

"He will," said the Russian girl. "Believe me, he will. He knows what happened to others of his kind in Russia, Hungary, and Bavaria who tried to be stubborn. He loves his life as much as all those fat lazy rats."

"But they can't shoot him if he won't accept so sharp an ultimatum." Jarni was shocked by the girl's hints of violence. "After all, he is a Socialist, a comrade."

"A comrade?" The ruddy girl snorted with contempt. "A fine comrade! Calling himself a Socialist and letting private property go unharmed, licking the hands of the big taxpayers for a few alms, stuffing the pockets of imbecile generals with the people's pennies, paying subsidy after subsidy to universities which serve nobody but the bourgeois brood! No, to shoot him would probably be too honorable for this swine. There are other ways of knocking him off."

Her hatred, her voracious desire for retaliation, were in startling contrast to her Madonna-like features.

"I marched with Bebel," said the old man, "and I marched with Liebknecht. They were all no good. My stomach is as empty as before. Kill them, drown them, the damned bunglers. My life is done for, and I still have to march."

They had reached the bridge over the river. Cakes of ice floated on the leaden water and had piled against the stone pillars of the bridge. On the other embankment stood the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Interior, and closest to the bridgehead, the Ministry of Public Welfare. From there it was only one block to the Lyceum. But Jarni's heart did not fill with triumph as she looked at her old school building. The life of freedom she had been craving had proved a heavy burden.

There were too many demonstrators. The last rows, and Jarni among them, did not leave the bridge. They lined up against the balustrade while the others thronged the plaza before the ministry. A gentle slope from the bridge to the building gave those on the bridge a clear view of events. While the crowd sang the Internationale, a group of five men and two women entered the ministry. Among them Jarni distinguished Erich's tall lean figure. As time went by those carrying streamers and posters started to shout slogans. The rear guard on the bridge took them up.

"We want bread! Down with the Socis! Down with the army! We want bread!"

It was fun to shout in unison, and it soon became a kind of mass-hypnosis.

"Kill the traitors! Hang the generals! We want bread!"

But an hour passed and nothing happened at the ministry. The crowd got tired of shouting. The cold wind blew through their shabby clothes, and their empty stomachs made them impatient. Finally a man whose face Jarni knew from the newspapers appeared on top of the steps leading into the ministry. His words were unintelligible on the bridge, but his gestures and the impatient shouts of the crowd indicated that the minister had refused to accept the ultimatum. Perhaps the unemployed would have gone away or they would have sent another delegation, but at this moment police sirens shrieked from the other embankment and a truck with some twenty policemen raced over the bridge, infuriating the demonstrators by the narrow margin by which it missed them.

"The dirty pigs," shouted the Russian girl. "Did you see? They were armed."

The old bricklayer spat in their direction.

The truck came to a stop at the entrance to the plaza. A very young officer jumped from the driver's seat, but vanished immediately under the raised fists of the crowd. There were shouts and cries. And suddenly the minister himself appeared at the steps leading into the building. He was a small lean man, a former university professor of economics who had gained a reputation as an early advocate of planned economy. Jarni had not seen Erich for a long time, now he appeared beside the minister, at least a foot taller and much broader than he. They had a heated argument, the minister obviously defending the presence of the police and Erich demanding their withdrawal. While they still argued, two young demonstrators climbed the rear of the truck and tried to wrest the guns from two policemen. No one knows whether the shot came accidentally during the squabble or whether one of the policemen lost his nerve. At any event, one of the boys on the truck spun around and fell to the pavement, a large gash in his cheek. Pandemonium broke loose. Infuriated masses surged up the steps and got hold of the minister. The young police officer, badly beaten and without cap and gun, tried to defend him with his handful of men. There were five more shots and then the demonstrators had disarmed the police and ordered them to leave the plaza. For some time the minister was invisible in the milling crowd till a group of men appeared at the bridge, pushed forward by the masses behind them. They dragged the minister along with them; his face was ashen and his right eye closed by a blow. The people on the bridge recoiled at the sight, leaving a few feet of open space between themselves and the slowly advancing group. The old bricklayer had been standing beside Jarni, his wrinkled face tight with tension. Now he ran forward on crooked old legs, and with an inarticulate sound of fury landed his fist in the minister's face. The man's head tottered back and forth before it fell on his shoulder, blood streaming from nose and mouth. Jarni was no longer conscious of the situation. She only saw the same blood-smeared face as that of the ammunition worker, and the same swaying of his head as in her grandmother's submission to death.

"Don't kill him!" she shouted. "You mustn't kill him!" But the crowd had already filled the space between her and the minister, rushing toward him with insane shouts. Jarni was whirled around and pressed against the balustrade, unable to move. She saw the minister's lifeless body in the water, floating between chunks of ice. But suddenly he started to swim. His head half-submerged, he began to crawl with the rapid, precise strokes of a champion. The crowd, silenced by the satisfaction of seeing their enemy drown, roared in disappointment.

"He's swimming, the dog!" cried a woman. "Look, he's heading for the shore."

Two or three feet away from Jarni stood a man, haggard and hungry, his emaciated face bare of emotion. Slowly he lifted his right arm, holding a police pistol, took aim, and fired. There was a splash a few inches from the minister's head, and he ducked while the crowd watched breathlessly. But he had to come up for air, battling against a large piece of ice between him and the shore. The man on the bridge aimed again, and this time he did not miss. The minister threw up his head, turned over on his back, one hand in the air, went down, came up, was hit again and disappeared. The last shot was mixed with the din of a salvo from the plaza. It was black with police, carrying rifles with fixed bayonets, and advancing in closed formation toward the bridge. The demonstrators stampeded toward the other embankment, and with them ran Jarni.

It was not her family's cruel satisfaction over the murder of the Socialist minister or the spectacle of death that broke Jarni down. It was the realization that she could not face violence as a political instrument. The plight of the four thousand marchers filled her with aching compassion, but every fibre in her revolted against a justification of murder. With the final certainty that she could have no part in the political program of a party that made bloodshed a means to attain power, her forlornness became complete. The warmth of her admiration for Dr. Funke and her passion for Erich rendered her present isolation unendurable. There was one last faint ray of hope. She remembered the great Socialist who was her uncle and whom she had never seen. In a long letter she related her experiences, and after weeks of tortured waiting received this answer:

Berlin, May 20, 1922

Dear little Jarni:

I have had your letter on my desk for a long time, and though I am a very busy man I have been reading it again and again before deciding on a final answer.

You ask in horror and revulsion: how can this happen, how can a man like your Minister for Public Welfare be murdered by a crowd he endeavored to help? How can we fight for a social order which is to be better, cleaner, more just than the past when we soil our hands at the outset with the blood of friends, when we allow hatred and disappointment to provoke our actions? How can one be a Socialist after that?

There are many answers to these questions, but first let me tell you this. Those who induced the crowd to commit murder were not Socialists. They were Communists who have nothing in common with us. Where we believe in evolution, in a gradual development toward a classless society once the old rulers have been deposed, they believe in physical violence.

Where we organize a planned economy on the basis of national peculiarities and requirements, they advocate a Russian colony. Where we want freedom for all who are willing to collaborate, irrespective of their former place in the liquidated society, they want a new absolutism of a proletarian elite. They are driven by revenge, not by the wish for construction, and that is why they will never be more than a political party. Permanent negation may create a mob movement but it will never create a new classless unity. Marx's aim — "an association in which the free development of each is the condition of free development of all" — has degenerated under their fists into a fight for exclusively material interests.

You ask for the basic aim of the Social Democratic Party.

It is the doctrine of social freedom and economic restriction, realized within the boundaries of our inherited order. We respect the constitution and the right of the people to reform it by free polls.

I shall not bore you with the details of this program but we are on our way and we shall reach our goal without debasing those who have faith in us. We hold that under proper leadership man's few virtues are stronger than his many vices. The growth of the Socialist cause has given us this inner security.

Let me close with a phrase of August Bebel which, I hope will show you the basic difference between creative Socialism and destructive Communism: "Man can't think highly enough of man."

Your Uncle,
Andreas von Neel.

That is how Jarni Dallmann, who had been an atheist at fifteen, a mystic at sixteen, and a Communist at seventeen, tried to become a Socialist when she was eighteen years old.

IX. The Great Bankruptcy

After the first World War the older generation of the German middle-class made a brave attempt to take up their normal existence where they had left off in 1914. They went back readily to civilian life, eager to rehabilitate their famished families. In return for their determination to become again loyal non-interfering subjects and to settle down to diligent and industrious lives, they expected the government to go back to its peace-time status of political professionalism, releasing them from any participation in state affairs. They stubbornly refused to see that the old division between ruler and ruled was no longer valid, that history had declared them to be of age, and that with the abolition of the Monarchy and the proclamation of the Republic they themselves had become the State. Hard lessons of poverty, bloodshed, and defeat had driven home to most of them the asocial megalomania of their old regime, and they were willing to give a moderately Socialist state a chance, but once their votes had secured this new government in power, their interest and their endurance were spent. They settled down to a life-scheme indistinguishable from their fathers' and grandfathers' conception of good citizenship under a monarch.

It was a short dream because the new rulers were not prepared for the task. Their leaders, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, had left them as their testament the solemn obligation to safeguard the interests of the working class, but they had mapped no course for the dangerous transition from oppositional minority to executive power. After the revolution was won and the Social Democrats held the undisputed majority in the Parliament and in most Federal Diets, they continued to be an opposition party, criticizing the militaristic hierarchy of the army, capitalistic exploitation, and the privileges of aristocratic landowners. But they went on paying pensions to every former army officer whose sole aim was the restoration of the monarchy and they insisted that every acre of land and every penny of bank deposits be returned to abdicated kings and princes. It would not have occurred to them to use the power which now was theirs to eliminate inequity, and even the highest state executives did not dare to interfere when the manipulations of leading capitalists plunged the country into inflation.

Amos Dallmann and millions of his kind were unable to understand the economic chaos resulting from a complete disruption of the monetary system. He had worked hard, too hard perhaps, considering his age and the starvation diet of the war years. In him was the instinct of the ant, which will start a new hill no matter how often and how thoroughly the old structure has been destroyed. Amos Dallmann had bought no new clothes since 1913; he wore discarded suits sent by his American brother; and he had not gone back to delicacies like butter, cream, or coffee. He stuck to margarine, skimmed milk, and roasted chicory seeds, insisting that food was totally unimportant. He had no intention of getting rich. Money as such meant nothing to him, and he did not feel any obligation to leave a fortune to his children. But he was fifty-five years old and he had to save for the time when he would be too old to work. The rising remuneration for his work filled him with delight. He lived in the pre-war concept that higher pay means prosperity, completely unaware of the vicious circle of rising income and rising cost of living.

One morning in May 1923 he went to the post office in Pine Hill to mail a letter to his brother in New York. The postal clerk weighed the envelope carefully.

"Thirty thousand marks, Mr. Dallmann."

"What?" said Amos. "What did you say?"

"I said thirty thousand marks, Mr. Dallmann. Thirty thousand."

Amos Dallmann looked blank.

"It was eight thousand the last time I sent a letter in February."

"February!" exclaimed the clerk as if Amos had referred to antediluvian times. "Since then the dollar has increased its value — let me see — " He ran his finger over an old table hanging beside the scale. " — has increased its value by something like 900 per cent."

Stunned, Amos looked down at the envelope; slowly he pulled a bundle of bank notes from his pocket.

"One — two — three — four — " counted the clerk. "My goodness, Mr. Dallmann, why do you keep all these one thousand bills? They are no longer any good. Well, here are a fiver and a tenner. Twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two. Twenty-two thousand, Mr. Dallmann; you still owe me eight thousand marks."

"How much?" asked Amos vaguely. He had watched the clerk count the banknotes, but his mind had been absent.

"Eight thousand." The clerk gave him a puzzled look. "You only have twenty-two thousand here. Do you understand?"

"I'll leave the letter here," said Amos dully. "I'll drop in on my way back from town and give you the rest."

"Better come before twelve o'clock. We close from twelve to four, till the new dollar rate for tomorrow is out, and by then this letter here will cost a few thousand more."

Amos did not answer. With stiff legs and a head that felt strangely light he walked out of the postoffice.

"How much for a streetcar ride?" he thought. "Two or three or ten thousand marks? And I have not even a penny in my pocket, not a single copper penny!"

He had the physical sensation of walking on ground that had lost its stability. It was like being on a conveyor belt which carried him forward in a rapid, involuntary movement.

After walking for an hour through streets which seemed no longer familiar to him Amos reached his bank.

"Hans," he said when he sat in the manager's office, "you have handled my account for thirty years. Tell me the truth. Should I withdraw my money?"

The banker looked surprised and amused.

"I don't quite understand you. . . . You want to know whether you should withdraw the twenty-odd thousand marks you have in your savings account?"

"Exactly. I am afraid it will be worth less and less if I wait any longer."

"Now look here, Amos. It's impossible that a man in the position of a construction engineer should not know what's going on. How much do you pay your assistant?"

"I don't have any assistant." Amos doggedly evaded the issue. "Since the war I have been doing the drafting myself."

"All right, all right, it does not make any difference. But you have a foreman, haven't you?"

"Of course."

"And how much do you pay him a week?"

"Sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and twenty-one marks. But that is something quite different. My savings are protected by the government. And I never bought anything but gilt-edged securities. They can't be affected by this insane inflation."

"But you haven't paid in a penny on your savings account for quite some time." The bank manager built up the argument with the patient logic of someone who knows the psychology of his adversary only too well. "How come? You're a very thrifty man, Amos?"

Amos Dallmann was embarrassed. "Well, you see, living costs have gone up considerably. The fees I was paid for my recent work — "

"went straight to the grocery store," interrupted the manager. "You don't happen to know how much your food bill was last week?"

"Of course, I do." Amos, the typical German housefather, would rather lose his argument than have anyone suspect that he did not keep track of every penny spent by his wife. "Around forty thousand marks."

"And you're worrying about some twenty thousand marks? They are gone anyway."

Amos was white.

"Will you please arrange to have the balance of my account paid out to me," he said tensely.

"Right away?"

"Yes, right away," shouted Amos. "Do you think I want to lose my hard-earned money because of your dirty financial manipulations?" The banker gave his old friend a knowing look. Amos was not the first one of his customers to lose his temper. He left the room and came back with a huge envelope stuffed to the bursting point with paper. Amos Dallmann was still sitting at the same place. His white head rested on his thin hands, lined with the calluses of thirty-five years of draftsmanship, and he sobbed in hopeless bitterness.

"I am sorry to disturb you, Professor." Jasper Dallmann stopped at a polite distance in front of the professor's desk. "Would you be kind enough to sign my credit book?" He opened the small black book in which each course taken at the university had to be confirmed at the end of the term by the teacher's signature, and put it on the wide, paper-covered desk.

The professor looked up from his work. He was an elderly man, short and stout, with a mane of grey curls, and eyes that fascinated by their deep warmth.

"What's the hurry, Dallmann? We have still four weeks to go before the end of the term."

"I'm leaving today," said Jasper. "May I be excused from the remaining classes?"

"Any special reasons? You know I don't like students to miss these last weeks when I give a summary of the whole course." He looked over the rims of his glasses at the young man, expecting an explanation. But Jasper looked back at him with reticent eyes.

"Would you please sign the book, Professor," he repeated, ignoring the previous question.

"Look here, young man!" The professor put down his pen and folded his hands over a manuscript. "I'm still your teacher and you are still my student as long as you are in this building. You have asked a favor of me, to sign your book before the appointed date, and I am perfectly willing to comply if you will be good enough to explain to me why you have to leave before the end of the term. There must be some plausible reason," he added in a persuasive tone. "A student of your ability does not drop his work so easily."

"My father will not be able to send me a check in the future. I must give up my studies."

"Oh, that's serious." The professor took off his glasses, biting pensively at one end of the frame. "You were to start your thesis this coming term. 'Frederic the First and the Third Crusade': wasn't that the subject you had in mind? It would be a great pity if you had to give it up." He looked thoughtfully at the young man. "Don't you think we could work out some kind of a plan to carry you through the next year?"

"I don't think so, Professor. There is no sense in my staying at the university under present circumstances."

"Don't give up so quickly." The professor walked toward the high window and looked broodingly at the peaceful university quadrangle outside. "Something must be done. I have a lot of good friends in this town. I'll ask them to get together and arrange for one free meal per day for you; and there's old Mrs. Meiersheimer with her empty castle. She can give you free quarters. I know she'll be delighted to, and I'll get you work as a proofreader so that you can earn some pocket money. It may not be the most agreeable solution but the most important thing is that you get your thesis done." He walked back to Jasper, his face beaming with satisfaction. "Now what do you say?"

"Thank you very much for your good intentions, Professor." Jasper spoke unobligingly. "But I am not the type to take alms from your friends."

It was only a nuance, a very slight stressing of the word "your," but the professor understood. His joviality was blotted out by the age-old sadness revealed in his eyes.

"Of course you couldn't, Dallmann. I am sorry I offended you by this offer. I should have known from your pre-university record, but I forgot. I wanted to forget what I knew about you because you have done excellent work in medieval history. Childishly I had thought that what I had been teaching you for three years about historical facts and their causality might have awakened you to the imbecility preached by your former leaders in the free-corps movement."

Jasper stared at the old man with coldly hostile eyes. His lips were tightly pressed together and his jaw bones worked visibly in suppressed fury. The professor watched him and the curiosity of the historian proved stronger in him than the sadness of the abused Jew.

"Tell me one thing, Dallmann, one last thing and I'll sign your credit book. What are you going to do now? Don't be afraid, I won't tell anyone. It's simply a bargain between you and me."

"I am joining the Reichswehr," said Jasper reluctantly, looking at the book on the professor's table, regretting that he had come.

"You are joining what? The Reichswehr? But, good God, why the Reichswehr of all things? Do you really think twelve or twenty-five years in a republican people's army will make you happy?"

Jasper gave the professor an ironical look, and the pride of knowing more than the world-famous historian was stronger than his caution.

"I'm afraid, Professor, you judge the Reichswehr too much by the regulations of the Treaty of Versailles, so cherished by you as an instrument of peace. Next time you mention this 'republican people's army' in your lectures, you may add that not all of its old officers are traitors or mercenaries. There are forces working within this mock organization which have decided that the patience shown with the Red rulers of Germany is too much. One day in the near future we shall prevent them by armed force from going on with union dictatorship, reparation payments, and inflation."

"But all the things you mention: dictatorship of one group, war reparations, and above all, inflation, are consequences of the World War and of the monarchy's inability to handle domestic and foreign problems in a sound and progressive way. You must know that, Jasper?"

In his ardent desire to convince, the professor had forgotten about the previous offence.

"My courses should have shown you that the present disaster is in direct causal connection with political developments since the Congress of Vienna."

"Your courses, Professor, have taught me one thing, that Germany has been everyone's prey and everyone's battleground since the destruction of the Holy Roman Empire. I consider it my task to inform the men in the army about the facts of history, and to convince them that it is worth one's life to fight for the restoration of this Empire. Your signature, Professor!"

Jasper did not feel the satisfaction of having won a battle when he walked down the corridor from the professor's room. The schism within him hurt. After the cruel years in the Brigade, six terms at the university had built up his worn-down body. But he had never enjoyed his easy success as a student, or the quiet, sheltered atmosphere. The papers were filled with reports of rebellion and assassination, and in torturing self-reproach he had blamed himself for not doing his part to bring about the renaissance of a heroic Germany. A coward, he had chosen the easy way of personal satisfaction while only the hard, deadly, and practically unattainable goal of total rebellion was worth striving for. The old fears of his boyhood broke out in his heart like ulcers, fear of his mother's lashing scorn, fear of his cousin's physical superiority, fear of his little sister's natural talent for living, and stronger than all, the fear of not being considered an equal by the comrades of free-corps days. It drove him from one self-castigation to another without giving him peace. Now he had decided to settle the issue once and for all. An army contract would prevent him from yielding again to the decadent life of a scholar and to the looseness of liberal thinking.

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"Fifteen minutes for criminal cases, thirty minutes for political prisoners!" shouted the guard. "The space between visitor and prisoner has to be not less than fifteen inches."

He blew a whistle and the heavy iron door at the rear end of the room opened. Jasper stood pressed against the wire mesh partition which was the end of the free world. His face was anxious. If Harold was in the last line of prisoners filing into the enclosure they would not get a good spot at the partition and precious minutes would be lost by speaking in masked phrases. But Harold was the second in line. A very old man before him was too deaf to understand even his own wife's remarks, and next to Harold came von Tattenberg, who could be trusted since he had been convicted, like Harold for aiding the assassins of Walter Rathenau.

The striped prisoner's suit hung from Harold Dallmann's stooped shoulders and his gait was dragging. But he beamed when he saw Jasper waving at him with both hands as if it were possible to miss him behind the wire mesh barrier.

"I'm so darned happy to see you, Harold!" Jasper's voice was full of emotion. "How are you, Tattenberg?"

"Lousy, thanks," and the young count concentrated his attention on the girl who had come to visit him.

"The treatment is still pretty much O. K.," said Harold. "But the food, oh God — it's the rottenest stuff I ever swallowed. Can't you get something to eat, Jasper?"

He looked so hungry that Jasper felt a desperate pity.

"I'll get you food, even if I have to steal it. They have better rations in the army, I heard. I'll try to collect something for you. If only I knew where I'm going to be stationed."

"So you signed up, and they'll send you away," said Harold bitterly. "When did you enlist?"

"Last Friday."

"And did you inquire about my chances?" But Harold knew from his cousin's face what the answer would be.

"Of course. I talked to the desk sergeant, but the time is not yet ripe. There are still too many Soci comrades in charge. They refuse to take men who have been convicted for political reasons. And they also pretend not to know what 'Black Reichswehr' is. — 'You have been signed up for twenty-five years,' the major yelled when I got my contract. 'Make no mistake about it! When we say twenty-five years we mean twenty-five, and you'll serve every day of it.' — He knows of course as well as I do that half of the new recruits sign up for twelve years and stay for one or two to get enough training for the time when we'll make up for 1918. There's always some sensible doctor around to discover that the man will go blind or die of tuberculosis if he remains in the army."

"And you?" asked Harold. His simple blunt face was begging like that of a child, and the palms of his hands were so violently pressed against the wire mesh that it bulged. "How long are you really going to stay?"

Jasper looked into his eyes and slowly he lifted his hands and pressed his palms against those of his cousin. His face was relaxed now, without the sharp pressure of his lips and the eternal frown on his forehead.

"Chin up, pal," he said softly. "You have only another eight months. They'll pass quickly and by then, well — " He laughed confidently, pressing against Harold's palms, "by then I'll have enough influence in my regiment to get you in."

"Take those hands down," called the guard who had been standing at the back wall behind the prisoners, but the two young men were too engrossed in each other's presence to pay attention.

"Down, I said!" With his club the guard knocked Harold's hands down, unconcerned by a look that was a death sentence. Harold bit his lips and his fists opened and closed convulsively.

"Never mind," Jasper whispered. "They can't really hurt us. But do you see now why I'll have to stay as long as possible in the army? I have to get the right spirit into these boys who have been poisoned by Social Democratic education. It does not matter how much they know about shooting. The important thing is that they must know their target."

"I won't see you then till I get out?" Harold's voice was utterly hopeless.

"I'll try to see you again. If it's possible at all I'll be here next Friday. And if you don't see me, Harold, don't be disappointed. I'm working for the cause, never forget that. And never forget that you are my friend — the only friend I have."

They looked into each other's eyes and Harold's sagged features seemed to come to life again under Jasper's glance.

The police guard blew his whistle. "Visiting time is over."

Once more with a quick, warm touch the cousins pressed their hands together through the cold wire, then Harold turned around, the second one to vanish in the depths of the prison.

A huge sun pierced Jarni's darkened mind with such an abundance of light that it hurt. She tried to resist it but the golden glare kept filtering through her eye lids. With great effort she turned her head from this light she did not want, but an irresistible power lifted her out of the darkness. While her body was still numb, sensation had began to return to her hands and their first reaction was to pull the blanket over her head, high enough to shut out this blinding sun. But it was too late. Her hearing had already made contact with the world, and a voice, still far away, said: "Let go, I tell you, let go!" And the blanket of unconsciousness was finally and irrevocably pulled away from her face.

Jarni opened her eyes and blinked into a flashlight.

"Are you awake?" asked a gruff voice, now close by, and the light vanished, relieving a burning pain in Jarni's brain. A nurse with a dull, tired face straightened out her bed so that the six red stripes of the counterpane formed a continuation of the six vertical bars of the bedstead.

"Keep your hands straight at your sides," she said without looking up from her work, "and don't move till the visit is over. I won't tell you a second time, understand?" She walked away on feet worn flat and shapeless by many years of service.

Jarni closed her eyes and tried to grope her way back to unconsciousness. But there was no escape from the sounds penetrating her mind. The clatter of tin receptacles cut the air with a harsh scraping rattle, bells were buzzing like insects, and there were suppressed voices, blanketed at regular intervals by the dull repetition of the nurse's warning: "And don't move till the visit is over."

Then suddenly there was silence, the silence of expectation, but Jarni did not yet know its significance. She forgot instantly the impressions she had received just now from the outer world and her mind started a frantic search for a memory on which to base her identity. But there was the wide black gap of the anesthetic. Jarni was too tired to find her way beyond it, and she fell asleep.

It was the cold air that woke her up again. The nurse with the gruff voice — now silent and servile — had pulled the covers away from Jarni's body and folded them meticulously at the foot of the bed.

"Don't do that!" said Jarni sleepily. "I'm cold."

"Shut up!" the nurse said. "And don't you dare to move. Keep your hands at your side."

As under a cold shower, Jarni's foggy brain cleared and she remembered that this was a hospital. She was lying in the general ward of the University Clinic, picked up from the street with a severe hemorrhage and brought to the hospital in a screaming, ill-smelling ambulance. There was another bed exactly like hers three feet away to the right. A group of men in white coats were bending over the stripped body of a woman, whose face was covered by a night gown pulled back over her head. The nurse was aiming the flashlight Jarni had once mistaken for the sun between the sprawled legs of the nude figure, and a deep calm voice explained the symptoms of syphilis. Jarni felt a scream in her throat, and her head swayed to the other side. There was another bed like hers three feet away to the left. The covers were folded in the same immaculate correctness as hers. A female figure clad in the same gray shapeless shirt as she, lay there with her hands close to her side, but her face, a very human face framed by black curls, was smiling at her.

"Never mind them, baby. They're only doctors," said the woman, and the way she said it was so final that at least for the moment Jarni felt relief at having mistaken those white shapes for men.

"And besides you'll get used to them. They come every day and twice on Tuesdays and Fridays."

Jarni looked into the gay black eyes and felt like crying.

"Don't cry!" said the woman quickly. "Don't show them that you mind. Keep your chin up till they are gone."

The tears in her throat vanished and Jarni managed a smile. Then she lay stiffly with her hands at the thick seams of her night shirt like a soldier at attention.

The group stood now at the foot of her bed and Jarni recognized the young doctor who had been in the ambulance. He had a face like raw beefsteak, with two long duel scars on his forehead and chin. The oldest man, obviously the professor, looked at the chart over Jarni's bed.

"Miscarriage caused by hemorrhage," he read. "Uninteresting. Next case."

The men passed Jarni's bed, and a very young nurse with the round serious face of a peasant madonna covered Jarni, putting the counterpane again in the same mathematical relationship as before to the bars of the bedstead.

The face in the next bed had disappeared under gray flannel and Jarni saw that the woman's body was young and lean with round solid breasts. The professor lifted a piece of blood-stained dressing from her pelvis and a large irregular wound, dotted with blood clots and gauze, appeared. The contrast between the kindly smiling face and this mangled body was so unexpected that Jarni felt violently sick.

"Nurse," she called. "Please, nurse." But the nurse gave her a reproachful look. "Hush," she whispered. "Keep quiet, will you?"

And she waited for the next cover to be straightened out while Jarni vomited helplessly and ashamed.

"You couldn't wait a few minutes till the professor had gone, oh no, you couldn't!" sneered the old nurse while she changed Jarni's sheets. She threw another shirt, reeking of carbolic acid, on the cover.

"Get changed and hurry. I've no time for extra work." Jarni tried to sit up but her head was leaden and her arms would not support her. Holding her by her arm pits the nurse pulled her up and propped her against the bed frame, stripping her of the soiled shirt.

Everything was neat and covered up now at her neighbor's bed, but the woman's face had a yellowish pallor and her lips were white. She had her eyes closed, and the folded hands on the bedspread emphasized the lifeless impression.

"Has anything happened to her?" asked Jarni with a new sickening shock.

"No," said the nurse, gathering the linen together. "She has more than nine lives. Don't fall sick again, for Heaven's sake!"

Strenuously Jarni slid back under her covers. It started to get dark in the big room. There was a high window opposite her bed but the glass was frosted and she could only guess that night was falling. The room was buzzing with the din of female voices, laughter, calls, curses, and a few faint sobs. Jarni did not care.

All her being was intent upon detecting even a faint sign of life in the pale face on the other bed.

That night Jarni and the black-haired girl Lena had a talk.

"I thought you would pass out," said Jarni, "and I was afraid, yes, I was terribly afraid."

"That's comforting," said Lena. "I don't think anyone else would care. But you don't know me. I don't give up like that. They were taking the stitches out and that got me. You think they would allow you a teeny weeny bit of gas or ether. But no, not they! They would rather let you faint. That's cheaper."

"You have an awfully big wound there. An operation?"

"No, bullets. Two of them," said Lena coolly. "The second one went crooked. That did the damage."

"You were shot? That's terrible. Were you robbed too?"

Lena eyed the young girl mockingly. "Nothing to get from me, baby. This was a different kind of battle. Know what a card-sharp is? No? Well, never mind, you'll learn in time. Anyway the fight was between two gentlemen, and I was a little mixed up in it. But wait till I'm up again. Will I return the compliment, sister, will I pay them back!"

"Did the police get them?" inquired Jarni, fascinated by Lena's story.

"God, no! That would be the last straw, having cops poke their noses into our affairs."

Jarni did not understand. "But if they shot you?"

The black-haired girl gave her a long look. "Tell me, baby, where have you come from: the moon, the North Pole, or what?"

"I?" said Jarni innocently. "I worked in the union bookstore on Fischer Street. I'm a bookseller."

"A what?"

"A bookseller. What's so funny about that? It's rather interesting work, and it takes brains — sometimes."

"And you have never done anything else?" Lena inquired cautiously.

"I went to the Lyceum. But then I got interested in politics and had a fight with my family. So I left home, and my uncle — he's a famous man in the Socialist party — he got me a job in the union bookstore here in town. I have been working there for over two years."

"How old are you?"

"I'll be twenty rather soon." Jarni remembered that she would have a birthday in ten days.

"You seem awfully young to me. How did you get into this dump? You don't belong here, you little bookworm!"

Jarni turned away from Lena and looked at the room, which was dimly lit by small emergency lamps set in the middle of the ceiling. Then she slowly lay down.

"I'm sorry," said Lena. "I didn't mean to hurt you. Honestly, I like you. But you look funny among this scum. That's why I asked."

"It's all right. Only it's hard to explain." She really felt happy at having a chance to talk. "You see." She was looking up at the whitewashed ceiling as if it were a projection screen showing the picture of her life. "I thought I would be happy in the Social Democratic Party, but they never really accepted me. I tried hard, I never missed a meeting, but when they had their social gatherings or their outings they never asked me to come along. I never belonged to them. And selling books? It was awfully tiresome to get those workmen interested in good books. They were either dead tired or geared to one fixed way of thought. I worked out all kinds of plans, but I had to do the cleaning of the shop and all the bookkeeping after store hours and that wore me out. Twice a week I gave talks on books in the union community house and finally I got so used to being in that building on Fischer Street that I never went anywhere else. My room was not much good. It was too hot in summer and had no stove in winter, and I knew no one else in town."

Jarni paused, realizing for the first time that two years of freedom and self-reliance had been nothing but a gray and weary continuation of her experiences in the film factory.

"Then what happened?" Lena listened breathlessly to Jarni's simple story which was as new to her as the shooting cardsharps had been to Jarni.

"In spring the inflation got so bad that business in the bookstore was practically dead. No one wants to spend fifty or eighty thousand marks on a booklet. So they cut my salary till it was no longer enough to keep me going. I had to look for other work and I found a job cataloguing a private library."

"Doing what?"

"Making a catalogue, a card index; don't you know? You put books together dealing with the same subject, and then you have cards — "

"Never mind the books," interrupted Lena. "I won't understand that part anyway. Just go on."

"Well, he was a book collector, a bachelor, thirty-six years old, living in one of those big mansions along the East Park."

"Swell location," commented Lena.

"He was awfully nice to me, and I just loved to go to his house. After that dark bookstore in the back yard of the union building with all those workers who have good intentions but little manners, and that awful attic of mine in Line Street, it was like coming home again to be in a large airy place with good furniture, books, and pictures."

"Your folks are rich?"

"Heavens, no, but long ago when I was a child they had plenty and we still have that fine big house and the garden with the old birch and linden trees."

"So what did that rich gent do — the one you were working for?" Jarni was silent for a moment but the urge to talk was stronger than memories that hurt.

"I guess it's always the same." She tried to minimize what had happened to her. "I was not particularly interested in him. I loved the house and the books and the atmosphere of plenty after those years of privation. But somehow he took it differently. —

Men are vain, you know," she moralized. "They think you simply have to fall in love with them."

"Wise child!" murmured Lena.

"So one night after I had worked late, he knocked me off." Jarni pulled herself to a sitting position and looked Lena squarely in the face. "You'll not believe me. No one would. But I didn't even know what he wanted from me. I only understood after it was too late."

"I believe you, kid."

"It's funny." Jarni looked back to a past that was millenniums away. "I once was in love with another man, a pastor. At that time I knew all about it. I wanted him, and I was not afraid. We never got together though. But here with this man, I didn't even know what was going on." It all came back to her again — the shock, the prostration, and the bitter abandonment of the hope that love would be an experience great enough to make up for all the loneliness she had endured.

"You stayed with him?"

"Of course, I did. What else could I do? It had happened, and he said he loved me. And what's the difference anyway? I had thought it would be something strong and wonderful to have a man, to belong together. But I never felt it."

Lena listened to the resigned voice and her rash warm heart burnt. "So he got you pregnant, that swine?"

"Yes, but I did not know," explained Jarni objectively. There seemed to be no hatred in her, only this abysmal resignation. "My mother never mentioned sex to me and I had no girl friends to learn from. I didn't know a thing, and by the time I found out it was already the fourth month."

"And he?"

Jarni made a long pause.

"Perhaps he really didn't know either. At least that's what he said. He thought I was just overworked or anemic. I did not take it hard when I knew what was the matter with me. I was not afraid of having a baby. I liked the idea. I am fond of children.

But he was just petrified! He blamed me for trying to trick him into marriage. That of course changed my whole outlook. I didn't want him to think of me as a man-chaser. So I agreed to take some medicine. It tasted awfully bitter, and he told me to go home and not call him till all was over. He had to be careful about his reputation, you know. This isn't a very big town. But he gave me fifty marks for an emergency."

Lena gave Jarni a long look.

"You are such a fool, one could smack you if you weren't so darned honest. The great big gentleman had to be careful about his reputation! I like that. And you? What about your reputation?"

"With me it's different. I no longer have a family to be careful about. I could take it. But I didn't get home that night. I got sick on the way and, Lena, how sick I got! I sat on the curb at the end of East Park and my life was running out in long streaks of blood. Someone called an ambulance, and — well, that's all."

Three days later Jarni left the County Hospital and the town where she had tried to be a good Social Democrat.

"Get yourself some clothes and the right kind of food and you'll be a beauty," Lena had said. "You're not made for Fischer Street and union bookstores. You can be a hit if you try hard enough. There are other things than books waiting for you."

*

Jarni had expected Lena's mother to resemble the old, old house where she lived in the ancient town of Cologne. When she entered a tiny room with low, carved beams and colored bull's-eye windows, shadowed by the huge tower of Great St. Martin's Church, she was startled to find a woman of not more than forty-five.

"Are you Mrs. Jupp?"

"Of course," said the woman, looking up from a deck of cards on the table. "What do you want?"

She looked like Lena but her eyes had not the kindly twinkle.

"I have a letter from Lena." And Jarni put the envelope on the table.

"From Lena? Oh my goodness!" cried the woman. "How is she?" She pumped Jarni's hand and pointed to a chair. "Sit down, girlie, and tell me all about her. Oh that stupid little fool getting herself into that trouble. Come on, don't just sit there. Tell me how she is." Her black eyes seemed to suck words from Jarni's mouth but her excitement was so great that she could not listen to what she wanted to hear. "Can you imagine?" she cried. "I get that scribbled postcard nearly five weeks ago:

'Mom, I ran into trouble. Two shots. But they'll fix me up all right. So don't worry.'

And that's all. Not a word since. I don't even know whether she's still alive."

"But she is, Mrs. Jupp," Jarni nearly shouted. "She is alive. If you'll give me a chance I will tell you all about her."

"Take a cigarette?" Mrs. Jupp pushed a mother-of-pearl box over to Jarni. "They are French ones, first class. No? All right, that makes one more for me. But why don't you speak? What does she mean by shots? Oh good God! what a fool she is!"

The long sigh that followed gave Jarni her chance, and she told all she knew about Lena's injury and the progress of her recuperation.

"And did she tell you who those men were?" asked Mrs. Jupp with a fierce revengeful look in her eyes.

"They were — I think she said they were cardsharps." Mrs. Jupp laughed.

"There are too many with that family name."

"She'll be back in six or eight weeks," comforted Jarni, "and besides, she wrote you a letter. You didn't even open it." Mrs. Jupp finally stopped talking. She opened the envelope and tears were streaming down her face while she read the lines scribbled in pencil on the back of a fever chart.

"So that's where you met," she finally said, blowing her nose vigorously. "And does Lena think the world of you! She appoints me your foster mother, so to speak, and she thinks you will be a good addition to the syndicate. So I'll give you a tryout, and if it works you'll get two dollars a week, your expenses, and five per cent of what we make." Mrs. Jupp pulled a bundle of banknotes from her purse. "Here's an advance of half a billion marks. You go over to the Golden Anchor in Bell Lane and get yourself a room and some sleep. And tonight at nine o'clock you come back and I'll introduce you to the rest of the gang."

"Thank you, thank you so much!" Jarni took the bills with a throbbing heart. She had never seen more than a million at one time.

"And there is one more thing. You have another dress? What you are wearing under that little coat does not look very attractive."

"I haven't," said Jarni blushing. "This is the best one I have. But I have black silk slippers with silver buckles. Do you think that would help?"

Without being impressed by Jarni's treasures Mrs. Jupp opened a huge wardrobe that filled the entire back wall of the room. It seemed to be stuffed with clothes. After long rummaging she emerged with a lovely black dress and a black turban with a rhinestone ornament.

"Black slippers, you said? They'll go nicely together. It's one of Lena's dresses but the way she talks about you she wouldn't mind your wearing it. And now run along and get some rest, and tonight look your prettiest. It's half the business."

An hour later Jarni was fast asleep in one of the huge mahogany beds of the Golden Anchor inn.

Lena's dress worked an enchantment. Its mere touch electrified Jarni, who never in her life had owned a silk dress. She looked again and again in the round mirror over the old chest in the hotel room, and she entered Mrs. Jupp's quaint house with the conviction that she was beautiful.

Two young men were sitting at the table, in the tiny room with the carved beams, watching her entrance attentively. Jarni had hardly said: "Good evening" when they started to laugh, not maliciously, but highly amused, as if Jarni had just told a joke. Tears stung in her eyes and she looked helplessly at Mrs. Jupp who leaned against the window.

"Keep your shirts on, you idiots!" The two men subsided. "Come here, my angel, and never mind those goofs. You'll learn how to dress. As you look now you wouldn't be much of an asset for our business. Come in here."

She pulled Jarni into a small bedroom and before a mirror that hung on the door.

"No one wears black cotton stockings any more. Here, try these," and she threw a pair of gray silk hose toward Jarni who caught them excitedly. "And what kind of underwear is that? A scalloped potato bag? Take that dress off. We must first fix you underneath before you can wear it again."

Bewildered, Jarni stood before the mirror in the coarse yellowish petticoat she herself had sewn from unbleached muslin after a 1913 pattern. There was a kind of fierce pride in her not to be ashamed of her poverty and inelegance, but when she felt the soft touch of a crepe de Chine slip on her skin she could not help giving the old petticoat a disdainful kick, and to smile at her figure, lithe and supple under the soft silk.

"And now your hair," said Mrs. Jupp. "Good gracious, who ever heard of lovely curls twisted in such an ugly pigtail?" With nimble fingers she unravelled the thick braid Jarni wore in a solid knot at the back of her head and brushed the golden strands over her fingers.

"Where's your lipstick?" Mrs. Jupp looked around for Jarni's purse.

"I don't have any."

"No lipstick? What are you using, cranberry sauce?" and with a skilled hand she applied her own make-up to Jarni's face.

"Now how do you like yourself?"

Jarni stared into the mirror but she could not answer because the girl in the glass was so beautiful.

"This is Martin, my son," introduced Mrs. Jupp, "and this is Hin, his friend."

"How do you do?" Martin shook her hand with a friendly grin.

"You look swell now," said Hin. "Shall we go?"

"Just a second." Mrs. Jupp put a dashing red hat on her black curls. "We must explain to our little bird what she's expected to do." She came to the table, talking now in a business-like manner. "We take a bus to Rheidt. There's a tavern near the river quay where you and I take a table by ourselves. The place is crowded with French soldiers from the occupation army, mostly Moors from Morocco. As soon as they see a blonde girl they go nuts. A blonde for them is like honey to a fly. They see it and they stick. Then Willem, that's the waiter, he invites them to our table, and you just talk to them, nicely, so that they feel at home. Know some French?"

"Some."

"That's a great help. The other kid we junked two weeks ago didn't know any. As soon as they've been nicely buttered I offer them a good exchange rate for their French money — always twenty per cent more than the last official exchange rate for the day. The problem is to get them to the point where they let go of their francs. And there are quite a few who have even dollars which they pick up from Americans in Wiesbaden or Koblenz. They're of course especially valuable customers and have to be treated with great consideration."

"But I — what have I to do with the deal?" Jarni was nervous and her mouth felt dry.

"Nothing but to look beautiful and blond, and to give those chocolate babies that certain hope for which they will part with their uninflated cash."

"And what happens after they have exchanged their money?"

"Don't worry about that," laughed Mrs. Jupp, seeing Jarni's apprehension, "That's where Hin and Martin come in. They take a table close by us, and if any of those Frenchmen get tough and want more than their money and a glass of brandy, they take care of them. Understand?"

"Understand?" repeated Hin, feeling the muscles of his bent arm with his left hand.

"And does it always work?"

"Most of the time," said Mrs. Jupp.

And it really did — most of the time. On this first evening two timid Frenchmen came to Mrs. Jupp's table.

"Four and a half billions," one of them said without paying any attention to the smiling Jarni.

"For how much?" asked Mrs. Jupp.

"Two dollars."

"Nothing doing. My rate is one and a half billion for a dollar."

"But there are people who will pay even two billions for one dollar," objected the soldier.

"Why don't you go there?" asked Mrs. Jupp coldly.

"The point is we need the money tonight — right away." He was obviously from Alsace because his German was faultless. "Come on, Madame, let's make a deal. We need four and a half."

"Then give me three dollars," insisted Mrs. Jupp.

They whispered together in French and then the older one said: "My friend here has to scram, that's why we need the money. He ran into trouble with a German policeman. He has to buy a ticket and get out. Two dollars and two hundred francs is all we have between us."

"Show it!"

The men produced a French pay envelope.

"All right, but only for you."

She put four one billion mark bills issued by the town of Cologne on the table. Then she added a pile of dirty, half torn

Reichsbank bills which bore the surprint, in red: "One Million Marks."

"You better drink something to get some life in you," said Mrs. Jupp to Jarni when the soldiers had left. "Willem, one quart red."

Jarni swallowed her first sip of wine, deep-red Rhine wine that stung in her throat. It tasted horribly, she thought, but she forced a whole glass down.

Two young Moroccans came to the table.

"Si vous permettez, Madame," they said politely taking chairs to the left and right of Jarni. They were chestnut-colored, with long thin faces and black wooly hair. Jarni felt dizzy and her head reeled. She had never before tasted alcohol, and the only thing she could remember under its influence was her obligation to please. She kept her face in a continuous grin while she watched one of the Moors roll a cigarette with long brown hands that were strangely pink inside. Through a slight haze she saw Mrs. Jupp smile encouragingly at her and she raked her brains for a conversational topic. Finally her ears caught a tune played by the band on the balcony: "Let us do as swallows do — "

"Voulez-vous danser avec moi?"

"Danser?" The soldier was happily surprised. "Vous voulez danser avec moi? Certainement, Mademoiselle, avec plaisir." And he got up, waiting for Jarni to follow.

But Mrs. Jupp put her hand firmly on Jarni's arm.

"Sit down, you fool!" she whispered. "Are you crazy? Dance with a French soldier?"

"I didn't know," stammered Jarni. "I thought I should." The soldier had followed the short conversation with attentive black eyes.

"Ah, je comprends!" he said loudly. "Madame la mère est mécontente. Allons, mon vieux." He pulled his friend from the chair. "Mademoiselle nous fait la blague," and he spat on the floor and turned away.

"That finishes us up in this place for some time to come," sighed Mrs. Jupp, gathering her belongings together. "What on earth made you think you had to dance with a nigger?"

"Why not?" asked Jarni. "I never saw black men before and they seemed nicely behaved."

"Well then, get it in your silly head, my angel, that you can't dance with a French soldier if you don't want to risk being pelted with stones and mud when you go out of here. French money is all right and very much so. But Frenchmen themselves are a scourge," she sighed, winking hypocritically at Jarni, "a scourge to the Fatherland. Never forget that."

With inflation reaching its last mad stage the soldiers started to get suspicious. Mrs. Jupp had to avoid the big towns and concentrate on small places south of Bonn. Jarni got her two dollar bills and often three or four besides. But after two months she realized that it got her nowhere financially. No matter how valuable a dollar was, ultimately it had to be exchanged for inflated paper marks to pay for food, rent, and the modest toilet luxuries she had come to consider indispensable. German money had to be squandered before it lost even its mock value, and with startling speed Jarni learned to spend. Jarni, who had lived for years on fifty marks a month and had kept a budget in which she marked down every penny spent for transportation, food, and clothes, thought nothing of investing a whole week's earning in a purse or a bottle of perfume. The general tendency of insecurity and waste had finally caught up with her.

One night in November Mrs. Jupp and her helpers were sitting in a particularly noisy inn. Of the three Moroccans at their table one was a tall husky sergeant with very dark skin. He held three dollars before Mrs. Jupp's eyes.

"Combien, maman?"

Business had been very poor and Mrs. Jupp's eyes virtually popped out of her head at the sight of the American money.

"Fifteen thousand billions," she said quickly. "That's two billions over the last official quotation." And without waiting for the soldier's answer she opened her purse and extracted a pile of battered banknotes.

"Entendez-vous ça?" shouted the sergeant, and all heads turned toward him. "Madame nous offre de l'argent sans valeur. Elle fait semblant de ne savoir ce que c'est que le Rentenmark." And then bending down to Mrs. Jupp:

"Vous voulez nous tricher, madame. Ca c'est une fraude, une grande tromperie!" His left hand knocked the purse from Mrs. Jupp's lap, so that it flew through the air, spilling billions and billions of paper money.

There was a terrific noise.

"Trompeuse, fourbe, putain!"

Bottles were flung towards Mrs. Jupp's table and some one snatched the dashing red hat and pulled her black curls. Jarni tried to come to her help from the other side of the table, but a painful grip at her shoulder spun her around. The husky sergeant who had started the fight held her tightly pressed to his body.

"Viens, ma gosse!" he grinned, pulling Jarni in the direction of the door. "Ne t'inquiète pas à cause de ta mère. Mes copains feront de leur mieux pour la contenter!"

A group of soldiers were dragging Mrs. Jupp out of the door followed by the frantically fighting Martin. Before Jarni could even call her name, Hin appeared beside the sergeant. With his elbows, fists, and heavy nailed boots he knocked the man against the wall and dragged Jarni through the kitchen into a dark backyard.

The noise died away. No one followed them as they groped their way to the embankment. The only sound was the rolling by of the Rhine.

"What about Mrs. Jupp?" Jarni gasped. "We shouldn't have left her."

"Martin will look after her," said Hin. "And besides, it's all her fault. Our business was all right when the government had no coverage for the emergency money, but when the market was stabilized she should have quit. And that she wouldn't do. She thought this wonderful inflation would go on for ever."

"I don't think it was wonderful," Jarni said pensively. "I think it was awful. But what are we going to do now?"

"There are several possibilities. I've a friend in Limburg. He has a booming business smuggling people who can't obtain legal entry into the occupied Rhineland. He gets as much as twenty dollars per safe arrival. What do you think of going there?"

Jarni did not know. She felt dizzy, not so much from the fight but from the sudden realization that the inflation had come to an end with the same unexpectedness as, five years before, the World War.

"I'll think it over, Hin. Let's have breakfast together tomorrow at ten and then I'll know.

When Jarni woke up next morning she had made up her mind to go with Hin to Limburg. She had to live; that meant a choice between the half-legal, adventurous existence of the Rhinelanders or the renewed squalor of the impoverished German middle-class. She was through with that, she knew positively. There was no other way to earn money and the pleasures and comforts it bought than by a complete break with bourgeois standards.

It was noon when Hin finally showed up. His face had lost overnight all its boyish good nature.

"Mrs. Jupp is dead," he whispered while they stood in the lobby of the Golden Anchor. "They found her battered body this morning in the Rhine. Martin has been arrested by the French. He'll be tried for fraud and violence, and every one knows what that means. We'd better clear out of town right away. If they catch us we've not a damned chance."

"Where shall we go?" asked Jarni, strangely unmoved by the violent death of a woman she had known intimately. Violence and sudden death seemed to be natural factors of her chaotic world.

"I'm going to Limburg," said Hin. "But you shouldn't come with me."

"Why not?"

He looked at her, shyly and admiringly.

"It's tough to make a decision like that, the way I feel about you, but I thought it over last night. And this morning when I heard about Mrs. Jupp I was sure about it. You are too good for this kind of life, Jarni. Things like last night's mess in the tavern shouldn't happen to a girl like you. And smuggling is even worse. You belong to an orderly life which gives you what a decent woman needs."

Jarni had never heard Hin say so much at one time.

"You are a good fellow, Hin." And as she spoke she knew for the first time that she was fond of him. "I wish, Hin — it's so difficult to explain — I wish these were not such crazy times and we could live a normal life like other young people did a long time ago. It's grand what you said about me, Hin, but still I want to come with you. I'm no China doll and I can stand as much as a man. It might be a little easier if I worked with you."

"Never mind me." Hin poked at the lobby carpet with the toe of his shoe. "I have learned to get along under all conditions. But I'd never forgive myself if anything happened to you. Smuggling is no joke. They shoot to kill at the border and they don't warn you either. No, Jarni, believe me, you can't become a smuggler."

With her vivid imagination Jarni had already accepted his refusal and had thought of new plans.

"I might go to Berlin," she said.

"How much money do you have?"

"Loads," said Jarni, feminized to a point where she had no idea how much money was in her possession.

"Then take the next train to Berlin. Promise?" He looked pleadingly. "I can't bear the idea of knowing you are here in this ruined no man's land of French brutes and German criminals."

"I'll go to Berlin, I promise."

"Good-bye!" Hin swallowed hard. "And good luck to you till we meet again!" And he ran out of the hotel as if he were afraid of changing his and Jarni's mind.

After she had exchanged the few dollars she owned for Rentenmarks it was only enough for a ticket to Giessen, some thirty miles outside the occupied zone. It would have been more exciting to go to Berlin, which was beginning to enjoy the reputation of being the center of progress and achievement in Europe. But to stand there in the dusk of a winter day on the platform of a station of which she had till then hardly known the name, was excitement too; and Jarni was determined to make this new adventure work. An elderly man had left the train together with her. He was fat and short with funny knobs on his bald skull. He made elaborate preparations to open a large umbrella against clouds of fine stinging snow blowing in from the open tracks. With his free hand he tried to lift up his suitcase and a cylindrical package wrapped in a multicolored blanket.

"Excuse me," said Jarni. "Do you know of a hotel here in town?" The man looked at her in surprise with his watery eyes. Under ordinary circumstances he would have known what to think of a girl asking a question like that. But Jarni still was Jarni. Her question was so direct that the old man couldn't help murmuring: "I'm a stranger here myself, but they wrote down an address for me. Just a second."

He put down the cylindrical package carefully, and produced an envelope from the pocket of his overcoat. Then remembering that he could not read without glasses he put it back, took a leather case from his vest, and put a pair of black-rimmed pince-nez on his nose.

"Here," he mumbled. "Now we have it. One second, please, just one moment. That's all right now. Here, let's see what they wrote." He held the letter close to his eyes. "White Elephant, Hotel White Elephant. Yes, I knew it was some kind of an animal. Seventy-three Selters Way. Can you remember that?"

He put the letter back and looked over the rims of his glasses at Jarni who felt guilty at having caused an old man so much trouble.

"White Elephant, of course I can remember that. May I carry some of your luggage? I have only this little suitcase, and you have such a load."

The man gave her another puzzled look.

"If you insist, you may take Hansel and Gretel. But keep them straight and don't shake them. That's the one thing they don't like." Jarni looked around. There was no one to whom his fairy tale names might apply.

"Here they are." The old man pointed to the cylindrical package. "Let's go now. They might get cold."

They walked across the plaza to a streetcar.

"If you're going to the Elephant anyway you may keep the cage," said the old man climbing into the trolley. "But remember to keep them straight. The ride will frighten them."

"What are they?" asked Jarni.

"Dwarf parrots. A very rare kind. And they are clever, I tell you." The old man's baby face beamed and the many wrinkles around his eyes looked like rays. "They can say four words now: 'Karle!' — that's me — 'Monkey business!' and 'Scram!' Don't you think that's a lot for such small birds."

"It really is," said Jarni to please the old man.

"And think what a racket they could make under that stuffy blanket! But not they, not Hansel and Gretel! They know that Papa is getting them a new home and that's why they are so quiet. They can think, just like us."

"What are you going to do here in town?"

"Me?" Karle had to wrench himself from the contemplation of his children's progress. "I am a bookkeeper. I got a job here with a new firm."

"Do you think they have any other vacancies?"

"I don't know," said Karle, "but you might try. They have just opened up. Maybe they need a secretary."

That was how Jarni became secretary to Mr. Lems, director of Lems and Company, Agricultural Equipment. Mr. Lems knew as much about agriculture as Jarni. After the stabilization of the Reichsmark, he had taken over an entire stock of binders, reapers, harvesters, and ploughs the manufacturers of which had failed to pay instalments on a mortgage owned by Mr. Lems. The actual selling of farm implements was done by Fritz, an ex-soldier, who was a clever, talkative fellow with the valuable knack of joking the farmers into buying. In the first weeks Mr. Lems did a booming business. The lack of tools during the war and the prohibitive prices following the armistice had depleted the farmer's equipment. On their visits to town they could not withstand the temptation of acquiring one of the new machines, invitingly painted in red and yellow. They insisted however, on trying out what they had bought, and everything went smoothly until it came to payments. The peasants had developed their own defense mechanism against the pranks of the economic system. They had gone back to bartering. Commodities were paid for with commodities and no power in the world seemed able to convince them that the new Rentenmark was better than the artistically designed emergency bills of their local communities, which they had given to their children to play with. If Mr. Lems wanted to trade, he had to accept commodities for his machines, and it became Jarni's task to weigh poultry, potatoes, flour, grain, and apples, and to arrange for the transportation of live stock to the city market. If the farm products so collected were insufficient to make marketing profitable for Mr. Lems, his employees got their salaries in food, Jarni carrying her share home in an old potato bag and cooking it on a primus stove in the basement room she had rented.

Soon this return to primitive forms of economy showed its shortcomings. Most of Mr. Lems' customers lived in the Westerwald and the Vogelsberg, two mountain ridges with thick woods and stony sloping fields where mechanical farming was hard to apply. Many farmers did not know how to handle their new machines and broke them; then they refused to pay for what they could not use. The losses mounted in Karle's books, and Mr. Lems and Fritz had to travel from farm to farm explaining the use of their machinery and collecting commodities instead of cash. When they were lucky and the farmer had become convinced of the usefulness of a mower or cultivator, Lems sold the live stock he had obtained in barter at a great profit. Provisions were still scarce and meat in great demand. But there were days when the soil was too hard for demonstrations or the peasant too dull to understand, and then things went badly. Every now and then Mr. Lems was chased by dogs from the farmyard without being able to take back his machine.

It was an unusually cold February. The temperature had gone below zero and there it stayed for weeks. The trade in small commodities had ceased. Potatoes and apples could not be shipped in the frost, and grain and poultry started to get scarce. Karle, Fritz, and Jarni had lived exclusively on their tiny deflation salaries and they were hungry. Then one day Fritz returned with good news. They had collected a team of oxen, two pigs, and six cords of good lumber. Mr. Lems, who now drove his own truck in order to bring back his machines or the commodities he received as payment, had gone directly to Frankfurt to exchange this rich yield for cash. He would be back before night and they all would get their salaries and a bonus to boot.

"A bonus? How much?" Jarni looked up from the old typewriter on which she had been practising.

"Dunno," said Fritz. "But the boss seemed in a spending mood. He said something about twenty marks."

"That would be grand; that's just what I need." She looked over to the clothes rack where her coat was hanging. It was the same coat her mother had bought while she was working in the film factory; it was threadbare and shiny now, with the lining showing through the cloth.

The big iron stove in the office had been going all day long but around five o'clock it started to cool off.

"Get some more coal, Fritz," called Karle into the adjoining showroom where Fritz was polishing the blades of a mechanical plow. There were few machines left in the barn, but Mr. Lems had promised to replenish the stock as soon as the new spring models were on the market.

"There's no coal left. I used the last at noon. Wait till the boss comes. Then I'll run over to the yard with the truck and get a few tons."

"What time is it?" asked Jarni.

"Five-thirty," said Karle. "I guess I had better go. Maybe Lems had engine trouble. He may be late."

"You don't have to wait," said Jarni sullenly. "You live in a hotel. They heat your room and give you a week's credit. But I have to wait. I had figured on buying food on my way home, and the meter that feeds my gas stove takes nothing but real coins."

"It's not because of the food," Karle apologized. "I would wait till Lems comes, but Hansel and Gretel have to have their feathers sprayed and they want fresh water. If I'm late they get restless." He wound a thick, brightly colored muffler around his neck and put a sealskin cap over his bald skull. "Good night then. Hope Mr. Lems comes soon."

Fritz switched the light off in the showroom.

"Too cold in there to work," he said coming over to the stove where Jarni sat in her old coat, her office smock wrapped around her legs.

"Why don't you go home?" she asked, feeling hopelessly low. The chilblains on her hands and feet hurt and she was hungry. She would rather have been alone and not be forced to talk.

"Why should I?" said Fritz. "That sleeping room of mine is a smelly hole, and besides I don't think you should stay here by yourself. I have seen a lot of bums in this neighborhood lately." He went over to a cupboard. "Want a drink?"

"What is it?"

"Black Forest cherry-water — genuine. I do my own bit of trading here, you know. I repaired the jalopy of a traveling salesman the other day and he gave me two bottles in exchange. It's wonderful stuff, burns like fire."

The mere mention of fire was enough to make Jarni try.

The white liquid ran down her throat like ignited oil. She coughed and tears came into her eyes but a glowing warmth spread through her body.

"I guess I had better stop," she said, handing the bottle back. "That stuff is too strong and my stomach's too empty."

"That's easy to remedy." Fritz produced a loaf of bread from the cupboard. It was real German rye bread, no longer the gray, mushy conglomeration of war days; it was solid and dry and heavy, and of the deep brown color of fertile soil. But the best thing about it was the crust, golden and elastic like the bark of a precious tree, sending out the wonderful smell of full, unadulterated rye.

"I'll make you some 'fire birds,' " said Fritz. "That's what we called it during the war when it got too cold for other food in the Carpathians."

He poured the clear cherry-water into a cup and soaked lumps of bread in the liquid. Then he fished them out with his hands and placed them on the stovelid.

"Look! It's pretty." He was passing a lighted match over the soaked bread. The alcohol burned in a dancing blue flame, leaving the bread slightly toasted with a flavor of cherries and almonds from the liquor.

"It's awfully good." Jarni stuffed the last bit into her mouth. "Let's have some more."

She could feel how her depression vanished. The mixture of strong bread and strong liquor had a plainly exhilirating effect. She got up from her chair and without realizing it she started to dance, humming a tune that had sprung up in her memory.

"My thoughts are free
No one can hunt them — "

Fritz took a mouth organ from his pocket. He was leaning against the cold stove watching the girl with eager eyes.

"From Lucerne to Waegis to
Holdrioio holdrioio,
Need no stocking, need no shoe,
Holdriodio-dio-o-o — "

"You sure can sing," said Fritz admiringly. "Know this one?"

"A Frenchman went ahunting
A buck so silver gray — "

Jarni drank without bothering any longer about the bread. She was light as a feather, with swinging clouds under her feet, and she wanted only to dance and to drink, to make sure that she would never be cold again.

Suddenly Fritz stopped playing.

"That guy isn't coming tonight. We'd better quit."

"What guy?"

Jarni had completely forgotten what she was waiting for.

"Lems."

"Lems? Oh, yes, Lems." Jarni stopped dancing. "Think he'll come?"

"No, he won't. And we'll go home now. You've had enough and so have I. It's past eight."

He hung his coat loosely over his shoulders and helped Jarni to find hers which she had discarded somewhere on the floor.

"Ready? Let's go."

He switched off the light and Jarni, still humming, skipped in the direction of the door,

"When we went to Regensburg
Riding on the eddy — "

But there was an obstruction that held her back, arms clasped around her shoulders, lips seeking hers. She was so happily drunk that she did not realize it was Fritz. She only knew she did not want to be disturbed in her lightness and her songs. Without putting up a fight or doubting her ability to get rid of the weight hanging on her body, she took the other head between her hands and firmly bit into the nose she could feel hot against her face. She bit so hard and so long that the man screamed and let go. With a feeling of complete satisfaction Jarni danced out of the door.

*

When a violent knocking woke her up next morning the tunes and the dances were gone and she felt miserable.

"Who is there?"

"Police! Open the door."

Shivering, Jarni got into her old bathrobe, and straightened her dishevelled hair before the mirror. She was greenish from the hangover, and bluish from the cold, and she was anything but a pretty sight. Two policemen were outside, shivering in spite of good warm overcoats.

"You sure have a way of sleeping," said one of them reproachfully. "We've been knocking for at least ten minutes."

Jarni sat down on her bed, hoping not to become sick in the presence of the law.

"You are the secretary of Lems and Company."

"Yes."

"Get dressed and come with us."

"Now?" asked Jarni with an irresistible longing to go back to bed.

"Yes, now! And better hurry. It's too cold to wait any longer."

When Jarni was alone she fell back on her bed, but only for a second. Hangover or not, she was a German, and the mere sight of a policeman was sufficient to send her into a state of unquestioning obedience.

It would have been unpleasant to go through the streets flanked by two policemen if Jarni had been conscious of it. But she was too busy walking straight to ponder about her situation. One of the officers took the key from her numb hands when they had reached the office and tried to turn it in the lock. But it did not work. Angrily he stepped back, and charging forward, threw his full weight against the door. It sprang open — having not been locked at all — and the officer fell headlong into the room. Jarni, still in the slightly irresponsible state of semi-intoxication, laughed loudly at the sight of authority tumbling.

"You'll stop laughing when we find out about you," snapped the younger of the men while he helped his groaning colleague up. "A fine gang and a gay joint, it seems."

The cherry-water bottle lay in the middle of the room and beside it —

"Look here, what's that? Murder?"

On the varnished pine floor was a puddle of blood, and red stains led in an irregular zigzag to the door.

"What's that? Speak up!"

"That?" Jarni looked broodingly at the stains. "That's where I bit his nose," she said as if it were a most natural explanation. "Yes, I remember it now, I bit Fritz's nose."

The officer gave her a disdainful look.

"Nuts, plainly nuts! High time we find out what's going on here. Open the desk and the safe."

"I have no keys," said Jarni. "Karle, the bookkeeper, has them. He lives at the White Elephant."

They were on their way again, Jarni getting sober quickly, and the two officers full of resentment at this early morning assignment. Karle was standing in front of the washstand shaving, when Jarni and the police entered his room. Hansel and Gretel sat on his shoulders, breaking into cries of "Scram! Scram! Scram!" as soon as they saw the guests. Karle was so shocked at the appearance of the policemen that he cut himself and had to wrap a towel around his head to still the flow of blood from his cheek.

"Louis Kossenowsky has been arrested in Frankfurt," said one of the officers in a slightly politer tone than he had used speaking to Jarni, who after all was only a woman. "We have a writ against his property. His offices must be closed and everything sealed till the investigation has been completed."

"But — who is Mr. Kosse, Mr. Kossewy, or whatever you call him?" asked Karle, shivering in his long cotton underwear. "I never heard of him."

"He used the name of Lems here," said one of the officers impatiently as if Karle were too stupid to understand. "Come on, hurry up, daddy. We have no time to squander. Get ready and bring the keys."

Hansel and Gretel had now taken up the cry of "Monkey business!" and they screamed it so loudly that the police fled.

In less than half an hour it was all over. Big government seals were placed over all the locks, and a note on the door referred to police headquarters all persons having claims on or obligations towards Kossenowsky, alias Langstorf, alias Lems.

Jarni sat in Karle's little hotel room in the gray cold winter morning. He had made tea and was serving it with jam and crackers.

"You know why I buy zwieback?" he said, breaking his piece to bits. "It makes crumbs. I found out it makes the most crumbs." Over the rims of his pince-nez he looked proudly at Jarni. "It takes research to learn things like that. Crumbs are what Hansel and Gretel need. See? Here they are."

The two parrots were busy cleaning the table. Karle watched them happily.

"It's so educational; it gives them independence and sharpens their wits. Here, I put a piece of newspaper over a crumb. Now let's see whether they will discover it. Look!" His face was flushed. "Gretel got it. What a girl she is!" He crushed another piece to smithereens. "That's why I buy zwieback. Do you understand now?"

There was nothing on earth that interested Jarni less at this moment than the education of parrots.

"Have you any reserves to fall back on?" she asked.

"Me? Good God, no!" Karle laughed undisturbedly. "Twenty marks is all I own."

"What are you going to do?"

Karle thought so hard that his old baby face became nearly adult.

"Last Wednesday I sold a mower to a farmer from Schreinermuehle, somewhere in the Vogelsberg. He promised to bring two goats as payment early next week. Yesterday I saw an ad in the paper that the university hospital wants goat milk for patients. So what does Karle do? Karle calls up the university, and finds out that they are willing to buy the goats if they like the size of their udders. I know the fellow I sold the mower to. He'll bring the goats to town. He's honest as a Rentenmark. And then?" He looked challengingly at Jarni. "What will happen then?"

Jarni knew only too well.

"The police will get the goats."

"Right," confirmed Karle. "They will get the goats if — if we don't go and get them ourselves before anything about Lems leaks out."

"That's an idea," said Jarni. "But who will go?"

"I can't," assured Karle hastily. "I couldn't possibly leave Hansel and Gretel under the circumstances. But Fritz could go."

"No, not Fritz."

"Why not?"

"He — I — " She had lost the gay lack of inhibitions which goes with drunkenness, and she could no longer say: "I bit his nose." "Fritz behaved badly last night," she answered at last. "I won't talk to him again."

"Badly? What do you mean?"

"Forget about Fritz," said Jarni nervously. "He made love to me and I didn't like it. That's all."

"That scoundrel!" Karle blushed like a shocked old spinster. "Making love — !" And he gently stroked Gretel's soft pink feathers.

"I guess I'll have to go to Schreinermuehle myself to get those goats," sighed Jarni, and that settled it for Karle. He gave her the money for the ticket and an hour later she was on her way to the Vogelsberg.

The two-car train was empty; it was too cold for traveling. Heroically she fought against her sleepiness by watching the telegraph wires dance over the high snow drifts along the tracks, and by counting the crows routed from their perches on the poles and flying, bluish-black, into the leaden sky. But by-and-by the windows froze and she sat in a white icy cave. For a while she made little designs on the white panes: two circles with her fingertips, a scratch with her fingernail to connect them. But her mind strayed, and her hands became numb. Goats — Lems — a new winter coat. Fritz' nose — firebirds of bread, a whole burning loaf flying flamingly red against the gray sky — the engine sings: "Holdriaio, holdriaio!" But it wasn't the wings of birds, it was slaps. Jarni fought against them but they kept coming. Blows rained upon her; it hurt — it hurt. There was Hin and he would tell that Moor —

Jarni opened her eyes, but it was not Hin who stood there. It was an elderly railway conductor wiping the sweat from his red face.

"Glad you're coming to, Miss," he gasped, continuing to massage Jarni's hands and arms. "You had me scared. Don't you know you mustn't fall asleep when it's ten below zero? If I hadn't happened to miss your face behind that hazy window in Neufelden you would have been dead within an hour. Come on, Miss, get up. This is no joke. You come with me to my caboose and there you stay till you have to get off." Dazed and with only a faint realization of her narrow escape, Jarni went with the conductor who had to hold her up because her feet were frozen lumps. He rubbed them with his roughened hands till the circulation returned to normal, and Jarni had to get off the train at Schreinermuehle.

The ride back was easy. Jarni had been treated to hot coffee and steam noodles by the farmer, and in her pockets were two huge baked potatoes which acted as warming pans. The two goats had burlap bags tied around their backs and bellies, and in the empty railway carriage Jarni could take off her shoes and stick her feet between the covers and the warm silky pelts. They were good-natured animals, curious and sociable, and Jarni carried a sufficient supply of turnips in a bag to keep them entertained. But goats, no matter how sociable, are not used to crowds and city lights. When they arrived in Giessen in the late afternoon the noisy street car on the plaza and the blazing lanterns along the main street frightened them. With a jerk one of the goats broke loose from the halter and galloped into the street. With an outcry Jarni saw half of her money vanish, and she set out for a hunt, dragging the other goat after her. It was a strange sight, even for a small town. Jarni's hair was flying in a wild blond maze around her head and the little Basque cap sat crooked and rakish over her left ear. The fleeing goat was uncertain where to go. She ran back and forth over the drive, missing being run over by inches. Finally she was attracted by a great red limousine. With lowered head she attacked the vehicle, rebounding, slightly numbed, from the polished door, and Jarni caught hold of the rope around the goat's neck.

"I'm terribly sorry," she sniffled into the face of a fur-clad man standing beside the car and studying a road map in the light of a street lantern. "If you let me know I'll try to pay for the dent in the door as soon as I have sold the goats." The furry man looked the girl over and smiled. He had a brownish complexion, keen brown eyes, and a large mouth with strong white teeth. His smile was encouraging and Jarni tried to smile back though she still had tears in her eyes and was constantly jerked back and forth by the unruly goat.

"You want to sell these animals?" he said. "How much do they cost?"

"Oh, you couldn't buy them," said Jarni. "They would mess up your beautiful automobile."

"Did you hear that, Benton?" The man turned around to the car where another man appeared at the window. "Here I wanted to buy you a nice goat but the owner thinks our car is too fine for it."

Jarni was bewildered. Did he really want to buy the goats? It would be a marvelous opportunity to get rid of them.

"They cost fifty marks, Rentenmarks, both of them," she said in a business-like manner. "They are first class goats, and in case you have children, goat's milk is — "

"No, really, I could not buy any goats." The man was still laughing. "But what are you going to do with them? Have you a farm?"

"No, I haven't. I am selling them to the university hospital. They want them."

As if the bad goat disliked her future destination she gave Jarni a vicious push from behind and Jarni flew against the man who caught her by the arm.

"I guess you better get them to the hospital," he said. "Where is it?"

"Way out at the university. Yes, you're right. I must hurry. It's getting late and I have at least half an hour's walk."

"May we take you there?"

"With the goats?"

"Joe will take care of that," said the man pointing to a negro chauffeur who had been sitting motionlessly in the front seat during the conversation. With clever hands he caught the animals by the forelegs and installed them in the front compartment. It was too narrow for them to buck, and they seemed resigned to their fate as soon as the car started to move.

Jarni sat between the two men in the rear, a heavy fur robe over her knees, her head resting against a soft pillow with a faint smell of Russian leather.

"My name is Curt Monkenberg," said the brown-faced man who had talked to Jarni. "And this is Mr. Curtis Benton."

"How do you do?" mumbled Mr. Benton, looking out of the window, obviously disapproving of the goat interlude.

"I'm Jarni Dallmann. I think it's awfully nice of you to take me to the university."

"It's a pleasure," said the man named Monkenberg. "Please tell me where to go and I'll tell Joe. He doesn't speak German."

"I can tell him in English," said Jarni, regretting that it would take only a few minutes to get to the hospital.

"Thank you so much." She jumped out of the car before the goats could get away again. "I hope you have a nice trip."

"Sure." Mr. Benton sneezed so hard that the car shook. "A very nice trip." He buried his nose in a huge handkerchief and looked reproachfully at Jarni with red inflamed eyes.

"But wait a second!" called Mr. Monkenberg. "I want to see you tonight. You can't leave us like that in a strange town after you have admitted you speak English. You don't know how Mr. Benton is yearning for the sound of his native tongue. It'll cure his cold in a jiffy."

Mr. Benton gave him a reproachful look and turned his head toward the window.

"We'll wait here." Mr. Monkenberg was undisturbed by his friend's disapproval. "As soon as your goats are sold we'll take you back to town."

The hospital clerk first refused to accept the goats at such a late hour, and then reduced the price to forty marks, discovering a bruise on the evasive goat's head. But Jarni finally talked him into the deal with frantic oratory. To go back to the red car she had to get rid of the goats.

"We have decided to stay in town over night," said Mr. Monkenberg when she returned. "Is the Roman House a decent hotel?"

"Decent? Oh, yes," said Jarni, "but much too expensive. The White Elephant is good too and costs half as much."

"It's the Roman House for us!" grunted Mr. Benton succumbing to another spell of sneezing.

"May we ask you to have dinner with us?"

"Me?" Jarni was perplexed. "But I — I have to go home to tidy up after that hunt, and then there is Karle waiting for the money."

"That's all right," said Mr. Monkenberg. "We'll wait for you."

"Sure — he'll wait for you," echoed Mr. Benton but Jarni was too excited to notice his sarcasm.

The red car waited in front of the Elephant while Jarni gave Karle his share, amounting to thirteen marks and thirty-three cents, and deposited Fritz's share with him; and it waited before the run-down mansion in a snow-covered garden where Jarni lived in a basement room. She took Lena's black silk dress with the fringes from the closet, and squeezed her frozen feet into the silk pumps; she even managed to fix her hair a little as Mrs. Jupp had done that first night in Cologne. Lipstick, powder, and perfume, which she had not used since she had come to Giessen, were all useless because they were frozen; but when she waded through the snow back to the red car, Jarni felt she had done her utmost to live up to the standards of the Roman House.

Then it was her turn to wait in the hotel lobby while the two men got their rooms, and finally she sat in the dining room and was served her first square meal since the end of the inflation.

Mr. Benton was taciturn. He coughed and sneezed incessantly and finally had to excuse himself to get a new supply of handkerchiefs.

"Your friend doesn't like me, Mr. Monkenberg."

"He's rather sick. He can't stand the climate. He's lived all his life in California and the cold here is simply too much for him."

"He's an American?" asked Jarni in awed admiration.

"Yes, of course. Didn't you hear that when he talked English?"

"I never met a real American." Jarni looked respectfully at Mr. Benton who was returning to the table.

"What's so special about Americans?" Mr. Monkenberg sounded jealous. "They're just people like us."

"Oh no," protested Jarni. "Americans have money and peace and work. They have all we haven't. They are the only people who always come out on top."

"You're a strange girl, Miss Dallmann." Mr. Benton looked for the first time with a spark of human interest at Jarni. "You sell goats in an obscure German town, you have chilblains all over your hands, which obviously have never had a manicure, and you haven't even a decent winter coat. But you talk English and you have the diction of an educated person. Won't you tell us who you are?"

"I'm no one," said Jarni lightly, "or perhaps I'm every one of my generation. My father spent the last of his money to send me through the best school in town. Then I had to shift for myself. I've worked in bookstores and as a secretary. At the moment I don't know exactly what to do next. The man I've been working for has been arrested as a crook. I'll have to take a job as a maid or a waitress, most probably. When I have saved up enough for a ticket I'll go to Berlin."

"But have you never considered learning something, going to a university or an art school, preparing for a career that will make you independent of all these hazards?"

Mr. Benton's voice was friendly now with an undertone of concern.

"Why should I? There is no such thing as a career or an assured existence. Even if I had enough money to go to a professional school it would only mean that I would lose so many years. No matter how showy a degree I would get, I'd have to take any job that came along for the mere chance of survival as soon as I left school. Because by then a new inflation, a new war, a new depression, or a new revolution would be under way and all I would have learned would be obsolete, unwanted. No, there is no planned existence for us. I want to live, forget about the joyless atmosphere in which I grew up. That's what I want. I'm terribly hungry for life."

Curt Monkenberg looked musingly at her.

"Perhaps I can help you a little if your hunger for life is not too big."

The next morning Jarni left Giessen in the big red car, and two nights later she stood on a huge stage before a brocade curtain, a little guttersnipe in a worn-out blue skirt and a faded sweater, the round Basque barret over her left ear as on the day of the goat hunt. With an untrained voice that was molded by emotion alone she recited a prologue to Charlie Chaplin's picture "The Gold Rush," which Curt Monkenberg was promoting in Germany. As Jarni Dallmann stood before an elegant crowd of first-nighters in the big city of Hamburg, all her hope, her courage, and her despair rang in a plea for the poor, nameless, and meek of whom "The Gold Rush" tells. With jubilant certainty she knew that she had found her calling, that her voice was the instrument, and the stage the background, to realize the dream of her life.

That night, when she kissed Curt Monkenberg, she loved him with all the passion that was in her, not knowing and not caring whether it was the man to whom she gave herself, or whether it was the great romantic future he seemed to hold in his determined hands.

X. Reach Unto Heaven

Berlin has no sky line like New York, no tradition like London, and no beautiful architecture like Rome or Paris; and it is without the natural advantages that make Vienna the gateway to the Balkans or Chicago the shipping center of North America. The surrounding Mark Brandenburg is poor and sandy, yielding hardly enough for its rural population. There are no raw materials in the vicinity to encourage industry, and it is too far north and too far east to serve as a focal point for the vast industrial and agricultural interests of the West and South of Germany. The little Slavic fishing village was first made known to the civilized world by itinerant monks, returning from the wilderness east of the river Elbe, at a time when Cologne had already celebrated its eight hundredth anniversary as the seat of a bishop, and Aachen had seen German kings crowned in its Cathedral for more than four hundred years. The first rulers setting foot on the soil of Brandenburg came to subjugate the marauding local gentry who made a living by waylaying merchants and peasants. In the days of dynastic magnificence no Louis, August, or George made Berlin the apple of his eye, lavishing fortune and talent on its beautification. Andreas Schlueter and Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the only official architects of genius, labored at a time when the young kingdom was fighting to survive, and a castle, an armory, a theater, and a guard house are the only relics of Berlin's past as the residence of a dynasty.

It was left to Wilhelm the Second to descend upon the city with a shower of pseudo-Norman, pseudo-Gothic, and pseudo-Renaissance buildings. But he was too late. The citizens of the young capital had grown tired waiting for the benevolence of their princes and had made Berlin their own metropolis. In less than a hundred years tenacity, self-confidence, and an indefatigable spirit of emulation put one of the most disadvantageous spots of Europe in the limelight of history. The bombast of the Kaiser's architectural dreams faded beside rows and rows of palatial homes, huge apartment buildings, restaurants, dance halls, and parks which outnumbered all the amusement spots in the rest of Germany. The turgid World's Fair style of the nineties had given the newly recognized burghers the opportunity to exhibit their quickly earned wealth, taking stony revenge upon their rulers who had neglected to create example and tradition. Berlin in 1914 was a potpourri of stucco façades, atrocious monuments, and slums, situated in the most arid sandbowl of Central Europe, without resources and without geographical justification for its position.

The Berlin that swallowed Jarni Dallman ten years later was on its way to become the healthiest, best planned, best housed capital in Europe. The period of time between these two dates marked the rise of a city that had decided to make the superlative its life aim.

It was the reaction to a lost World War that distinguished Berlin from the rest of Germany and forecast its peculiar political development. In 1918 Berlin did not seem to mourn its dead or its crumbled dynasty as did the royal capitals of Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, and Saxony, nor did it nurse its hurt pride by brooding bloody retaliation. No monument for the fallen heroes was erected as in other German cities; and thirteen years passed after the armistice before finally a discarded sentry box was remodeled into a memorial for the Unknown Soldier of the first World War. In 1919 Berlin was like a young horse, rid of master and bridle, galloping with long suppressed initiative into adventure and experiment. This new impetus in a country that stared petrified and impotent at the shambles of its ideals was like a magnet attracting those who wanted to escape the prostration of moral defeat. There was hardly a good journalist who stayed in the editorial office of his local paper; hardly an outstanding scientist or a great artist who considered his provincial audience satisfactory any longer. Fascinated by the prospect of building a new center of social, scientific, and cultural perfection, they left their narrow surroundings and went to Berlin. Those who had over-estimated their abilities and could not stand the ruthless competition and nervous strain became stranded; but in an amazingly large number the fanaticism of progress spurred hidden talents to extraordinary performance. This dynamic energy outran even inflation, which tore to shreds what little reconstruction had taken place in the rest of the Reich. By the time Jarni arrived in Berlin experts in every field were turning out results that startled the world; and trains, racing into the terminals, unloaded an inexhaustible reserve of creative strength.

Jarni knew nothing of the structure of this society. She only knew some of its results. Berlin was the place where Toller, Hasenclever, Bronnen, and Unruh wrote plays and books; where Piscator and Reinhardt directed the theater; where Lang had made a film of the *Nibelungen;* where Furtwaengler and Klemperer conducted operas and concerts by Hindemith, Schoenberg, and Stravinski; where public museums dared to show the works of Barlach and Lehmbruck, Marc, Nolde, and Klee. That was the tale of a new world Jarni had heard on her wanderings through the provinces, and it was what she expected to find when she stepped from the train on what seemed to be magic ground.

Curt Monkenberg had left Hamburg a day earlier to attend to business on the way, and it had been decided that he and Jarni would meet at the Hotel Adlon. But Curt Monkenberg was not there. When Jarni finally had made her way through the crowded, flower-scented lobby to the reception desk, a supercilious clerk told her that Mr. Monkenberg had left a message in the room reserved for her. With obvious disdain an elegant porter placed her cardboard suitcase on a table beside a tremendous bouquet of red roses. Then she was alone. She stared at the room that was too big even for two, at the silk drapes, the antique furniture, and the shiny comfort of the adjoining bathroom. This, she felt, was Germany too, and with a satisfaction that was deeper than personal happiness she stretched out on the huge bed, trying to forget famine, revolution, and inflation; the grip of poverty that aged the body, and the certainty of continuous defeat that petrified the soul.

The Curt Monkenberg who met Jarni next morning was very different from the gay companion of the car trip. He was rushed and nervous, speaking to Jarni as if she were a soldier, getting instructions before a battle.

"I have arranged a program for you, and my secretary has written it down. If you keep your appointments punctually you'll be able to make it in one day. There's no time to lose. I've arranged for a new outfit for you. The best dress-shop in town will give you credit till you've signed your first contract. Don't interfere with their selection of clothes. They know better than you. That will take one hour and thirty minutes. At eleven o'clock you are to be at the hairdresser's to have your hair done. You can't run around with that amusing mattress on your head. At twelve-thirty you must be back here. My company's car will pick you up and take you to the studio for a film test. I persuaded Bolung to do that for me. You know, of course, that this is a rare favor. Do your best; you'll never get another chance to be tested by him personally. At five o'clock we meet in the hotel bar to have cocktails with Professor Wasau. He'll train your voice for half of his usually enormous fee if he thinks it's worth his while. Behave accordingly. Then you take a cab to the Feldstein Clinic. From there — "

"But what am I going to do at a clinic?" Jarni interrupted. Curt Monkenberg looked up from the paper in his hand with a slight trace of embarrassment.

"We have to take care of you, don't we? You can't risk an accident now. He's the best birth control man in town."

And relieved of this explanation he returned to the timetable, finishing up with dinner at the Savoy and a cabaret show on Kurfuerstendamm.

Eight in a row they sat before the huge mirror in the make-up shop of the film studio; eight girls with the same brownish-red grease over their faces, their hair done in the same modish "windswept" style, their eyebrows plucked to form the same straight line. Jarni watched them and something in her revolted against so much leveling of personality, but it did not penetrate her consciousness. Every nerve in her was tense with the desire to be successful. She would meet Bolung, the creator of films which had made Germany the center of a new art expression, and Bolung would decide her fate as an actress. A large piece of cardboard with a number five on it was pinned to her back and she stood in the wing of a small stage listening to instructions that came from behind walls of boiling and hissing mercury lights.

"Now listen, Miss," said a voice with a heavy Eastern accent to number three. "You go to the table there. You find a letter, you read it, you are astonished, then sad, then distressed. You cry, you look up, you see an imaginary gent coming toward you. You are astonished, then glad, you buck up and crack a smile. That's all. Got it? Let's go. Gustav?"

"Here," answered a voice from the ceiling.

"Smack her a hundred on the brainpan and fifty in the mug. Fritz?"

"Here." A voice from the rear.

"Two spots on her under pinnings and one on the fanny. Ready? Go! Astonished — sad — distressed — cry." The thick voice in the dark worked like a metronome. "Gent — astonished — buck up — smile. Cut. Next!"

Jarni tried not to think. She bit her lips, clenched her fists, and tried to feel what distress and happiness meant concentrated in three and a half minutes. When finally her performance was over and the "cut" sounded, her body was covered with perspiration and she felt as if she had played through an eternity.

The eight young women who sat in the dim theater two hours later to hear the verdict were hushed by expectation and fear. They avoided looking at each other. A careless smile, a gesture of self-confidence, might challenge fate. The primitive suspicions of the theatrical world had caught up with them quickly. Unnoticed by his victims the almighty Bolung had slipped into the room as soon as it was dark and the tests started to appear on the screen.

"Number one O.K.," said the foreign voice, muffled by a thick cigar, "Number two O.K. Number three lousy. Number four lousy." Jarni's heart skipped a beat. "Number five O.K., Number six lousy. Number seven lousy. Number eight another try."

When the lights went on, the master had vanished, leaving behind three smiling and five crying girls.

Her success had given Jarni a tremendous lift. She radiated youth, genius, confidence when she met Curt and Professor Wasau. The famous voice teacher was a bald obese man with fat bejewelled fingers, moving in heavy clouds of perfume.

"How cute, how lovely!" he lilted, patting Jarni's cheek and poking his finger in her ear. "I must say, Mr. Monkenberg, you're a connoisseur," and he smacked his lips as if Jarni were a lobster tail à la pêcheuse. "Of course I accept her as a student, and as — a little friend." He winked roguishly.

Curt was highly satisfied. "I must run now." He patted Jarni's cheek. "You're a brick, Jarni. I'm very proud of you."

The great wave of excitement began to recede with the vexatious interlude at the Clinic, and by the time Jarni and Curt were ready to leave for the cabaret show she was totally exhausted.

"Let's stay here," she begged. "I'm dead tired. I want to hold on to you, to feel you, and to know that I'm not alone in this cataract of activity."

"But darling, it's only ten o'clock now. You can't ask me to go to bed in the middle of the afternoon. Come on, I'll order you good strong coffee and a glass of French brandy. You'll see it does wonders."

And it did. Black coffee, thick as syrup, and old brandy were the magic formula that pulled frayed nerves together and made tired, light-blinded eyes sparkle. It was the drug that kept Berlin running.

The clock struck three when Jarni finally lay in her wide majestic bed. Her fatigue had given way to a tenseness which kept her awake. She listened to Curt's regular breathing and she could touch his hair and his face with the tips of her fingers. But he was as irretrievably lost as only a sleeping person can be, swallowed up by his own sub-consciousness. Step by step she walked back over the summits and depressions of this long day on which she had entered the big race for the superlative, weighing her chances for success, that seemed identical with supreme happiness. In the dawn of a new morning she stood before the big mirror in the hotel room, surveying herself without the elegance of new clothes and the flushed excitement of recognition. She remembered that only one week had passed since the Friday on which she had been sitting shivering beside the cold stove in the office of Lems and Company, dreaming of nothing more than a new winter coat and enough food to keep alive. The fate which in seven days had hurled her from this misery to her present peak of hope, and the gift of beauty she saw outlined in the mirror, were the material fate was made of. And Jarni promised herself, with the romantic devotion of youth to use it for the accomplishment of the unique task that had been assigned to her, and to no one else, in the building of the great pyramid of human achievement.

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How does it feel to be stripped of one's clothes and to realize that the film part Curt Monkenberg has secured for the girl he loves is to be played in the nude? How does it feel to laugh loudly and desperately as if this laughter could make the transparent walls of a hundred spot lights impenetrable for the eyes of technicians, directors, and colleagues? Jarni did not know. With the furious determination with which she had survived her childhood, the war, and the chaos of adolescence within the chaos of revolution, she had decided to feel nothing and to do as she was told. Every means, she understood in these weeks of nakedness, was sanctified by the end that would confirm her as part of this new world. The cycle of time and of seasons stopped. Life was geared to an achievement that had to be reached as a step to further achievements. For weeks or perhaps months every natural reaction was blotted out. She existed in a state of blind obedience to the demands of work, food, and rest, mapped out by external force. Twelve hours at the studio, one hour for dinner, two hours at the night clubs to meet the press and the people of the theater, who measured her chances for stardom by the permanence of her smile. Half a Sunday given up to a drug-fed sleep, half a Sunday devoted to voice training by smutty Professor Wasau, and on Saturday nights an hour of love with Curt to which her senses did not respond after a week of effort to subdue unruly emotions.

And then it was suddenly over. The film was ready and, left without motor and direction, Jarni plummeted back into reality, experiencing the shock and pain of a smashup. She was exhausted, haunted by the doubts and self-accusations that follow in the wake of every creative effort. She needed warmth and understanding to survive without damage this abrupt change of her life's pace. But there was no one, no one but Curt Monkenberg, and he had no time. Jarni wrote, telegraphed, telephoned, and occasionally caught his voice talking absentmindedly into the receiver.

"Oh, it's you, Jarni. Soon, darling, yes, yes, I know. We'll be together soon. Wait till I've landed this new picture. It will be a terrific hit. You'll see. Then — sorry, darling, I've got to hurry. So long, darling!"

But Jarni could wait no longer. The grinning emptiness of the hotel room, the laughing, hurrying, determined people in the streets who all seemed to know each other and were strangers only to her, the harrowing uncertainty about her artistic performance, and the hopes of her awakened ambition, filled her with an anxiety that had to be shared. She moved into Curt Monkenberg's office resolved not to leave till he would come with her.

"The conference is still on, Miss Dallmann." For the third time the secretary came out of his room. "Would you not rather come back tomorrow?"

"No," said Jarni with the stubbornness of a child. "I won't."

The summer day became a hot summer night and Jarni was still waiting. She did not read; she just sat, looking at the door of his room and grasping the arms of her chair as if they were rafts to cling to in a deluge of loneliness. And finally the door opened, but it was not Curt Monkenberg who came out. It was a black-haired woman, superbly dressed, with a radiant smile on her face.

"You are Jarni Dallmann?"

"Yes."

"I'm Arina Colmer. I'm so glad to meet you."

Jarni took the outstretched hand of the actress who was famous enough to be known by everyone.

"I've a message for you from Curt. He's still in conference and it might last well into the night. He asks you not to wait any longer. But I'm free." She looked at Jarni smilingly. "I'm in town for two days to settle next season's contract. I would love to spend the evening with you if you feel like it."

Jarni was too hungry for human contact to refuse, and they left together.

Arina Colmer suggested clubs, cafés, bars, studios, gambling dens, dance floors, concert halls and theaters but Jarni chose a new indoor swimming pool at the outskirts of town. They swam in soft green water, with carbon bubbles bursting on their skins. Gently rolling waves carried them back and forth, and lying on her back Jarni was rocked by an artificial surf that had a smell of fresh pine like the shores of the Baltic. When she was tired of playing in the water she finally stretched in the white sand on the edge of the pool; she was soothed and comforted, warmed by an artificial sun. The huge glass roof had been opened and a steel-colored sky drew Jarni's eyes away from the earth. She thought of wild, lonely swims in the violent current of the river at home when the darkness of a moonless night had merged sky and meadows to a black ocean of isolation; of hidden reed-edged lakes in the Wend country of Lisatia in which she had plunged naked and unseen on the long solitary hikes she had taken during the last desperate year of the World War. Water had been a companion, a partner in fights and games, and it had comforted her now. Half asleep, she suddenly remembered that she was not alone, and that the beautiful body stretched beside her in the sand belonged to Arina Colmer. A little ashamed of her vagabond thoughts she turned around and met watchful eyes.

"You look a little happier now," the actress said.

"I am. This was just what I needed."

"Hungry?"

"And how!" laughed Jarni.

Arina's fast car carried them to a restaurant in an old mansion where food which would neither weigh down the spirit nor burden the body was offered at fabulous prices. They sat on a balcony, suspended above the dark eye of a lake, blinking from the reflections of many lights.

"Tell me about your work." Arina filled Jarni's glass with sparkling moselle wine.

"I played Venus — imagine!" Jarni blushed as if twenty million theater goers would not know all about it in a month or two. "I might have filled the bill as a contemporary example in the second part, but as a Venus de Milo imitation I must have looked awful. I'm much too skinny."

"I don't think so." Arina appraised every detail of Jarni's figure. "What did the men around the studio think? How did they behave?"

"Piggish, of course." Jarni emptied her glass quickly. "The worst was Blau, a former major, you know. It was all I could do to escape being raped and still keep my part."

The other woman looked into Jarni's eyes.

"Was it bad?"

"Bad? Pooh!" Jarni laughed a little too loudly.

"What are you going to do next?"

"I'll play on the stage, at least that's what Curt has decided, but I hope I'll be dressed in that part. You know Sternheim's 'School of Uznach?' "

"The most they'll let you wear in it is a bathing suit," said Arina.

"But the contents, the idea, I mean. Is it serious, is it worth one's effort?"

Jarni's voice was so anxiously pleading that Arina smiled.

"It'll be worth the public's while to see you in it," she said ambiguously.

They were lying in long comfortable chairs on Arina's roof garden high above the dark crowns of the Tiergarten trees. Occasionally there rose from the darkness below the voice of a lion, the shrill outcry of a tropical bird, the trumpeting of an elephant, merging with the distant noise of the street traffic. Jarni heard it and the strange contrasts of this town excited her.

"What was the matter with you tonight?" Arina Colmer looked calm and cool in beautiful pajamas of black lace that enhanced the whiteness of her skin. "Why were you sitting so stubbornly in Curt's office?"

"I had to see him," said Jarni poutingly. "I was so alone. I've worked from the first day I came here. I had no time to make friends. He's the only one I have."

"You think you love him?"

"Of course I do. I've lived with him."

"That wouldn't prove anything. So have I and so have others."

"How many?" gasped Jarni.

"Good God! I don't know the exact figure and it isn't important either. I only mean to say that a physical relationship is not necessarily identical with love."

She leaned back, blowing small blue rings from her cigarette and watching Jarni with half-closed eyes.

"But one can't separate love and sex. It — it's vicious."

"Of course one can; and what is more, one must. Love is submission to another life and the most certain death of any individual achievement. If you want to reach the peak as an actress, become one of the great stars, Jarni, you'll have to give up love, loyalty, and the devotion to someone else's life. All passion and loyalty in you are needed for your task. There can't be room for anything else."

"Did Curt ask you to tell me that? Did he send you?"

"Yes, he did. And believe me, he's right. He has great faith in your career. You're a type that's needed on the stage and on the screen. You have practically unlimited possibilities in playing yourself — the serious, proud, stumbling girl in transition. But you must learn to live for nothing but your talent and the goal before you, and give up squandering yourself on sentimental attachments and artificially constructed inner obligations."

Jarni stared into the sky and tried to abandon a dream that had grown within her since earliest adolescence — the dream of a perfect partnership. When she tried to part with it, it left a black, agonizing void.

Arina had come over from her chair and sat at Jarni's side, watching with her expressive eyes the shadows fleeting over the young girl's face.

"But there must be relaxation, warmth, the stimulation that springs from human contact?" Jarni said despairingly. "No one can live entirely without it. And I — I never could be a good actress without love."

She swallowed her tears and the corners of her mouth trembled.

"Of course, you couldn't." Arina put her cool soft hand lightly on Jarni's clenched fists. "Artists have a loyalty that is much more binding than attachment to an individual. We are all working for the same perfection, the same high standard. That's our loyalty. And we all know of our loneliness and our qualms, and of the obligation not to be content with a little personal satisfaction." Her hands caressed Jarni's forehead, her eyes, her mouth. "Only we who fight together can understand each other without the greed for possession and domination that marks bourgeois love." Her lips touched Jarni's lips, her body was very close, light, cool, and absorbing, and her hands stroked Jarni's stirred up senses into a gentle melancholy relaxation.

Months had become nameless; time was measured by work. Three months for the run of a play, ten weeks for the production of a film. Berlin had shrunk to the size of an army camp, its boundaries drawn by the site of ten theaters, half a dozen night clubs, and three film studios. It had been depopulated to an extent that paled the results of the Thirty Years War. Its inhabitants were but a thousand actors, authors, agents, directors, financiers, and journalists who in perpetual endogamy produced audience, cast, and society. The spotlight of publicity, concentrated on their lives, had made of the remaining four million people a shapeless, voiceless multitude. Lakes, canals, fir forests had vanished from the memory of the few who had ever seen them, and even daylight, the most common of human possessions, had become a rare experience in a life spent amid Klieg lights, reflectors, and Neon lamps. But achievements mounted. By a rigid system of selection, stage, screen, literature, and music had achieved an exalted standard of perfection. The process of mental inbreeding produced a harmony of play and direction, of setting, vocal expression, and physical appearance that would have been perfect had it not floated in void space, related not to the living world but to abstract concepts.

Jarni worked at a terrifying tempo, not yet a full-fledged member of the inner circle, but a partner in the effort to create a perfect theater and a perfect cinema. She had accepted Arina's verdict, condemning love, and she had learned to remedy heartache with the medicines prescribed by those who knew. When work was not exciting or plentiful enough to grant oblivion, there were always drugs, alcohol, and the more effective intoxication of transient personal relationships. Nothing and no one was left untried in a hunt for new experiences which had to be increasingly intricate to make good for the disenchantment that followed in their wake.

The place where this race for the extraordinary centered, where genius, sex appeal, and vice could be appraised; the tribunal where the chaff was sifted from the wheat and sentence was pronounced over the life and death of talent and hope, was a little wine restaurant in a street which had escaped the liquidation of the Kaiser's Berlin. It was one of their many strange attempts at evasion that drove men and women who worshiped nothing but progress to return night after night to two musty rooms with dirty, flower-patterned wallpaper, faded plush sofas, and the poor food of dilettante cooking. They could have afforded the glaring luxury of the new bars and roof gardens which had become the talk of the continent, but they squeezed into the unventilated parlor of one of their colleagues who ran the place, and they groped their way through a narrow, eternally stifling passage into the sanctuary of a still narrower, more poorly ventilated back room. They piled their mink coats and silk hats on a dirty basement landing, they were dazzled by bulbs dangling carelessly from the ceiling, and they drank wines which were expensive without being good. The secret was that only here was their isolation from the public perfect. If ever a bourgeois, a "man from town" ventured into this dive he was so disappointed by its lack of glamour that he fled, convinced he had sought the wrong address.

After fourteen hours of rehearsing Jarni and her friends sat on one of the sofas, too tired to go home. The high-strung whimsical direction of a famous Russian had used up the strength of every one in the cast. Holt, author of the new play, showed the strain most. He was drinking brandy straight, and all those present knew that the stream of profanity flowing from his mouth was the reaction of his worn nerves. As one of the early objectors to the Kaiser's World War he had suffered heavily for his convictions. Years spent in prison as leader of the bloody, ill-fated attempt to establish a Socialist republic in Bavaria had left him a nervous wreck without the strength to find inner resistance against drinking and sex indulgence. Weeks of blind excess were followed by inner rallies when past aims rose again to the surface of his consciousness, and he wrote plays of a strange subversive power, ballads full of the raw fascination of a primeval hatred.

It was for people like him that the refuge in the queer old-fashioned place had been created. With the instinct of comedians those who frequented it knew that moments of collapsing tension had to be shared to be survived, but should not be seen by the audience.

This night however two men and a girl who obviously did not belong sat at a table opposite Jarni. Unlike all previous intruders they stayed on in spite of the late hour. The girl kept staring at Holt with attentive eyes, whispering occasionally to her neighbor. She was about Jarni's age and had the same light skin and reddish-blond hair, but she was taller, and her whole appearance was in pronounced contrast to the current fashion. She wore her hair in braids around her head, and her suit was long and of conservative cut. Jarni had not noticed her for a long time, being too busy with her own exhaustion and Holt's changing moods. It was not until he had ended the unexpected recitation of a ribald prison song and was sitting with his hot face pressed against her hand on the table that her eyes met those of the girl. Something in her quivered with apprehension, and she suddenly knew that the girl's gaze was fastened on her and not on Holt. In an impulse of protest she went to the basement landing to retrieve her coat from a pile of garments.

"Excuse me, please, are you Miss Dallmann?"

Jarni looked up into the flushed face of the girl.

"Yes, why?"

"I just wanted to know," she said, adding with an admiration that sounded spurious: "I think you're a great actress."

She turned to go but Jarni caught her sleeve.

"One moment, please." She was irritated by the girl's tone and her own fatigue. "The way you stared all evening showed you were not a fan. I know you didn't come to tell me how good you think I am." She looked menacingly into the greenish eyes, attracted and repelled at the same time.

There was a line of contempt around the straight-lipped mouth.

"Why of course I did, Miss Dallmann. What else could have brought me to a place like this?" Her eyes flashed at Jarni in open sarcasm. "Good night, Miss Dallmann, I'm so glad I had a chance to talk to you. I always wondered what you were like."

She walked toward the door, leaving her two companions behind.

"Miss von Neel," called one of them. "Please wait, Miss von Neel, we'll be ready in a minute."

But the door had already slammed shut.

Her mother's unusual maiden name caused a strange reaction in Jarni. Like the span of a bridge, suddenly visible from a plane, it destroyed the insularity of her existence, linking her again to a past she had tried to forget. As she drove home she felt a burning sense of shame that she had spent years in Berlin without remembering her uncle Andreas von Neel. The urge to separate herself from the world from which she had come had overshadowed admiration and gratitude. She had forgotten that for many years the great Socialist leader had lived in her mind as the only justification for her whole family.

Andreas von Neel no longer lived in the disreputable northern part of the city. An architect of international reputation had built him a modern house at the edge of the Grunewald, a large pine forest bordering the new west end section of Berlin. Looking at the façade of steel, glass, and concrete Jarni found it hard to believe that anyone of her family should have decided on such an unorthodox style, and that the girl with the old-fashioned suit and the Germanic braids around her head should live here. She was strangely excited about this visit. It would be her chance to compare with reality the picture her imagination had painted of the man who once had influenced her so strongly.

He sat in a wheelchair, his legs covered by a robe. His face had hardly been touched by age; he had keen clear eyes and a strong protruding nose bent in a noble line.

"So this is Jarni, my niece Jarni." His voice had the sonorous well modulated tone of the trained orator. "Come here, child, and let me welcome you. I've looked forward to this moment for a long time."

For a second Jarni hesitated to bend down, dimly aware that she had never kissed anyone of her own family.

"I don't know what weak excuses you'll have for remembering me only after such a long time." Andreas von Neel broke the spell of moved silence. "But I'm perfectly willing to forgive and forget if you promise to see me more often in the future. There are not many relatives so easy to look at as you!"

He smiled, and Jarni, a little embarrassed at his admiration, looked away and met the eyes of a man who leaned against the fireplace. They were dark and impressive behind strong spectacles, and Jarni thought in a flash: "As dark as Jasper's eyes." There was nothing else one could notice about the man's appearance. The dark searching glance overshadowed the whole personality.

"Pardon me," he said with a shy smile. "The doctor is too excited to introduce me. I'm Werner Posener."

He took a few steps to meet her in the middle of the room and Jarni saw that he limped.

"That's right," laughed Andreas. "I forgot all about him. This is Werner the Great, editor of the Berlin News, who was as anxious to meet you as I."

"I'm glad to see you." Jarni was impressed to find herself talking to one of the most influential editors in the country. "I've been reading your paper ever since I came to Berlin."

"And what is the verdict?"

"You know yourself that it's the best newspaper we have. You treated me badly enough in your reviews of two parts I played, but even in these I agree wholeheartedly with all you said."

"I'm completely innocent." He looked with intense scrutiny straight into Jarni's eyes. "I handle only the political part, and that, I assume, doesn't interest you."

"You don't know her." Andreas von Neel still held Jarni's hand in his strong warm grip. "She's more interested in politics than any other girl I know. You should have seen the letter she wrote me shortly after the revolution. I tell you, it was magnificent in its clarity. She had been a member of the Communist Youth Association — "

"You still belong to them?" interrupted Werner Posener.

"No. I gave up all contact with political groups when I became an actress."

"Are stage and politics mutually exclusive?" There was a trace of irony in the editor's voice.

"It seems so," said Jarni slowly, realizing for the first time how utterly she had lost contact with world events.

"The stage is exclusive. Period." Andreas von Neel laughed. "You should know that, Werner. Narcissism is the basis of an actor's métier, an understandable vice, though, in the case of this young artist."

It was difficult for Jarni to protest because criticism and compliment were blended in her uncle's remark.

"You haven't a very flattering opinion about theatre people," she said uncertainly. "You share it, Doctor Posener?" hoping he would object to her uncle's characterization.

"I have no opinion at all on the subject." He smiled as if he were apologizing for his ignorance. "Theatrical art is so outside my realm that I know nothing about it. Politicians are boors, you see."

It should have sounded encouraging but Jarni had never felt so insignificant, and she was relieved when dinner was served and the conversation turned to food and drink.

"Where's your daughter?" she asked when it became obvious that the fourth chair at the table would remain empty.

Andreas von Neel and Posener exchanged a quick glance.

"I don't know," said the doctor. "Tell me, did you two ever meet?"

"Why? Did she say anything?"

"No. But she left rather unexpectedly under the pretext of some appointment when she heard you were coming."

"I didn't even remember you had children till last Thursday," said Jarni. "She — well, I guess one can say she waylaid me in a small restaurant where artists and actors go. But she didn't tell me who she was. She just stared at me all evening and finally said some nonsense about being a fan of mine. If it hadn't been for her companions who called after her I wouldn't have known she was your daughter. I wonder why she seemed so — so hostile, as if we were enemies, not relatives."

"At least it caused you to look me up," said Jarni's uncle, plainly determined to dwell no longer on the subject. "And that's reason enough to bless Vera's 'waylaying.' — Apropos of the family," he continued. "How is the noble clan? How have they survived the turn of the tide — Justine, worshipper of the Hohenzollerns, and Amos, the model of a perfect subject?"

But the answer was obviously clear to him because he didn't wait for a reply.

"Poor Amos Dallmann!" he mused. "It still makes me laugh to think that he — he of all people — had to be with me when I was arrested and was sent to prison."

He leaned back, smiling in recollection of that day thirty-eight years ago.

"I convinced the judge that he had caught the wrong man, but I guess Amos never forgave me. I wonder what he's saying now that socialism has conquered Germany."

"Nothing, most probably," said Werner Posener dryly, "because it hasn't conquered Germany."

Andreas von Neel laughed good-naturedly.

"There you have our pessimistic friend Werner in a nutshell. 'Hasn't conquered Germany.' Of course it has. For the hundredth time I ask you: Have we or haven't we gained seats in the last election; have we or haven't we an overwhelming majority in the Reichstag?"

"Yes, we have," admitted Posener but he said it wearily. "It's unnecessary to remind me of facts. But how often will it be my turn to tell you that this majority doesn't mean a thing now that we have allowed Hindenburg to become President of the Reich."

"Pooh! Hindenburg! A puppet, nothing but a puppet!"

"A puppet all right," Posener retorted. "But a puppet manipulated by whom?"

"By a handful of senile, impotent eastern Junkers and disgruntled army generals. You are not going to tell me that they can invalidate the Socialist majority?"

"It wouldn't invalidate our majority if you were right." Posener had stopped eating; but the older man did not allow the discussion to interfere with his meal. "The Junkers and retired generals are only a side show. The real handlers of your puppet Hindenburg are the big industrialists, the wrecked provincial middle-class, England, which wants a defense line against Russia, and Dutch capitalists. These groups together are more than enough to overrule a Reichstag majority which, by the way, consists predominantly of Prussians, leaving out southern and eastern Germans."

"Oh, go on." Andreas von Neel was a little angered but he didn't allow his irritation to show. "This differentiation between

Prussians and Germans is sheer hair-splitting. Prussia is the largest state and therefore indicative of the whole country. It was a strategic move, aimed at retaining the majority, to have Hindenburg elected President. Sometimes one has to howl with the wolves to get what one is after. You should remember that this policy of carefully controlled compromise proved successful when the party unanimously supported the war of 1914 which after all marked the end of the monarchy and the beginning of the Socialist era."

Posener's face was sarcastic when he answered: "You shouldn't try to repeat the nursery tale of that unanimous support. I was very young then and merely your secretary but I was old enough to understand that this unanimity was engineered. I saw three hundred workers demonstrate in Neukoelln against this unanimous decision, and they were promptly jailed with the full consent of the party bigwigs. I heard the violent protests of Liebknecht, Leusch, and Ledebur against this sellout to imperialism, and — " his voice was low and his face sad, "and I saw Rosa Luxemburg having a nervous breakdown caused by this 'unanimous' party decision. What's the matter with you, Doctor, are you mistaking me for this attractive but uninformed young lady?"

Jarni was too hurt by his irony to notice much of her uncle's reaction to Posener's question. With the bad conscience of a truant student she knew that the irony was justified and that she had not given any serious thought to current problems since the day she had closed the door of the union bookstore behind her. But to admit it would be greater humiliation than she could bear.

"I take it that your reference to my ignorance was meant as a compliment," she said tartly. "Maybe you're right. I just don't like to mix food and arguments."

It sounded rather silly and too cocksure but Werner Posener accepted the reproof. He bowed his head and busied himself with the cold remnants of his dinner.

"I'm sorry; I shouldn't have started this discussion," he said.

"The doctor and I are like spoiled children who force their problems and enjoyments upon everyone."

Andreas von Neel patted his arm.

"Don't try excuses. You know we're hopeless. There's nothing in the world I relish more than a good argument. I'm afraid my little niece will have to get used to it if she intends to honor us more frequently with her presence."

It was late at night when Jarni and Werner Posener left together.

"May I take you back to town, Mr. Posener?"

The editor looked at the elegant automobile. "No, thanks."

There was the same trace of sarcasm in his voice that had hurt her at the dinner table. He lifted his hat. "Good night, Miss Dallmann. I'm used to riding in the subway."

Jarni had no reasonable explanation for feeling so humiliated. "Good night, Mr. Posener, and I'm sorry that I'm constantly stepping on your toes."

He looked into her eyes.

"You're not stepping on my toes. Why do you say that? It was my remark about your political ignorance that was tactless and might have hurt you. I'm glad you gave me an opportunity to apologize." And then he added with sudden warmth: "After all, you're Doctor von Neel's niece and that means a lot to me."

He bowed again and limped away, his feet making a strange uneven sound on the pavement.

The memory of this visit never left Jarni, but she seemed unable to integrate it into her life. It somehow did not fit. The two men, their political and intellectual world, the powerful eyes of the editor, and her uncle's strange reluctance to talk about his daughter, were like the incoherent parts of a dream wedged between the tangible facts of her conscious existence.

Her life had reached a climax of intensity and suspension. A film based upon Judge Lindsey's book *Companionate Marriage* had been a success, and Jarni in the leading part was hailed as an actress of great promise. At the same time the exhausting rehearsals for Holt's new play had come to an end. The famous Russian director promised to create a revolution of the drama.

The new playhouse, which would open with Holt's play, had no resemblance to the old-fashioned theaters where the audience tried to stage their own social show against the actors who performed high up and far away. In this building they formed a single entity. The stage was a horseshoe, surrounded on three sides by the audience. Swivel chairs could be tilted to any desired angle, permitting a full view of the walls and the large cupola which served as a projection plane for the filmed scenic background. Loudspeakers carried the musical accompaniment of an invisible orchestra and the voices of the actors to every corner of the house, producing rousing echo effects if the play called for it.

Critics and audience alike were tense, waiting to pass judgment on the new theatre and the new play. They yearned for the extraordinary but they also held fast to their standards of perfect achievement. The obligation to recognize the sensationally new and to reject the old and traditional — no matter how modern its disguise — lay like armor around their reactions. A constant fear of being outdone by a keener wit or a bolder iconoclast made critics and audience merciless judges. Lack of success, no matter in which field, was identical with a criticism of all their efforts. There was no tolerance in the new Berlin.

The enormous room was darkened and the film projectors threw the images of three armies of soldiers on the walls, dragging homeward after a lost war. The ragged men marched over the heads of the audience toward the center of the cupola, loudspeakers blaring soldier's songs, commands, and revolutionary protests against one another until the spectator's attention had been completely won. Against this background the play developed, showing Wolfgang, a volunteer who had fought in the trenches, tortured by wounds, sickness, and the crumbling of his patriotic ideals. A world of broken morale, of leaderless opposition, and meaningless vows came to terrifying life in this "total" theater. Streams of blood, shed in a blind civil war, were projected over walls and ceiling. The rotating stage platform, divided into segments, displayed greed and debauchery, starvation, and blind search for a way out of the chaos.

On a small island of light in the center of the stage — an island surrounded by the Inferno — live Wolfgang and Marianne, his wife, trying to build up the normal peacetime existence of an average couple. There was the setting of a rooming house, an office, a dance hall, a factory, but it all seemed unattainable to the spectator because between him and this center of normal human life was a maelstrom of history, reaching with immense filmed projections of lawlessness and want into the ordered existence of the two people.

Arina Colmer as Marianne, and Dorant, playing Wolfgang, had fought each other tooth and nail during rehearsals, and their antagonism had reached a climax of noisy mud-slinging just before the first bell. As Jarni heard them play their parts in perfect harmony, their irritable personalities erased by deep mutual consideration, she suddenly understood that fights of jealousy and competition were started in a subconscious attempt to reach a state of high tension imperative for complete identification with a part. Some drank champagne, some resorted to sex, some took drugs, and these two fought, but it all was for the same effect of highest stimulation.

And then came her cue and she had to personify the aimless, searching youth of post-war Germany, whirling through the sections of the rotating stage as a student, a prostitute, a novice in a convent, a young mother, a lunatic, changing her appearance in the short intervals of time while the sector she had been in vanished in the darkness of the scenic background. She had rehearsed these changes so incessantly that she managed them mechanically, concentrating on nothing but the inner change from one personification to the next, and the lines of the text that varied from a Deus Misereatur to a lewd solicitation in the street.

When the first part was over, the entire staff listened tensely for the applause that would indicate the reaction of the audience. If failures had not been so deadly, triumphs would not have been quite so glorious. After the torture of uncompromising effort the ecstasy of acclamation was a fascinating experience. Those allowed to be present gave themselves to it with delirious relaxation. After a short silence a roar swept through the new building, and every one knew that this was the first instalment of a probable success.

The auditorium of the Playhouse had been planned for utmost concentration but in the foyer the accent was on diversion. A tamed jungle of vines, ferns, and wild flowers formed the entire west wall of the room, drawing the spectator's eye to a green infinity. The air was cool, and a slight breeze carried a symphony of scents, composed on a fragrance organ. There were no lamps to hurt the eyes, strained from the direct assault of spotlights and film projectors during the performance. A gradation from the clearness of a summer day to the deep shadow of a dawn in the woods ranged over the foyer, giving each visitor his choice of relaxation, and lending many moods to the orgy of seeing and being seen.

In the second part of Holt's play Wolfgang leaves the island of individuality in the center of the stage, becoming a miner, a worker, a tramp, a murderer till finally he emerges as the leader who understands because he has experienced. The chaos begins to abate. Like a co-ordinating power Wolfgang's voice consolidates the groups, drawing them toward a symbolic center — the community. Here Jarni appeared again. The chaotic armies marching home from defeat had changed into marching farmers, workers, students, mothers, and children. The last group was led by Jarni, immensely enlarged by her own shadow which sprawled over the entire cupola of the theater. Gigantic wings, the shadows of her arms embraced the marching masses, and walls and cupola echoed her exclamation: "Mankind is one!"

When the play ended every one knew it was a great day. Holt appeared on the tremendous platform with Finn, the architect of the house, with the actors, the director, the film producer, and the composer, and finally alone, helplessly small in space, which still resounded with words that had acquired an independent and uncontrollable life of their own.

Jarni was ready to leave her dressing room when she heard a sound from the corridor outside. It was a very faint sound, constantly drowned out by the shuffling of many hasty feet, and she knew that she had been waiting for this sound the whole evening — a strange uneven thump of footsteps on the stone floor of the hallway. There was a knock at the door and then Werner Posener stood in the room, carrying a huge bouquet of white lilies.

"How good of you to come!" Jarni said with deep gladness. He bowed and presented the flowers.

"They're beautiful. I love lilies."

"I guess your uncle knew that." His voice was as impersonal as that of a messenger. "He sends his congratulations and his thanks. He liked your performance very much."

Jarni turned around and laid the flowers on the dressing table. They were not from him, they were from Uncle Andreas, and he had not come to see her but to deliver a message.

"Did you like the play?" It was the burning desire to know if she had pleased him that made her bold enough to challenge his criticism.

"I liked your acting," Posener said in the same impassive voice in which he had given Uncle Andreas' message. "But I didn't like Holt's play."

"Why?" Jarni looked at him belligerently. Without knowing it she welcomed the opportunity to fight it out with him through the medium of Holt's ideas. "I think it is one of the great dramatic creations of our time."

Did that not sound rather trashy?

"It has political vision," she tried to be more definite in her encomium.

"I hope it hasn't. If the neat division between leader and led is our future, why don't we call in Mussolini?"

"But Holt's leader is no dictator," protested Jarni. "He's a symbol for a responsible multitude."

"That's a catchword without reality," said the editor unobligingly. "A responsible government is a team of the best men for the many jobs that comprise government. Anything else is either utopia or fascism." But as on that night in front of uncle Andreas' house a warm smile suddenly lighted up his stern features. "Here I come with flowers and a tender message from an admirer and start a political argument. I guess I'm incurable. Will you forgive me?"

Jarni took his outstretched hand and their eyes met in a look that hurt her. "I'm so glad you came. I hoped you would some day."

There was sudden emotion in his face, a question which did not formulate itself in words but which vibrated from his raised eyebrows. And then he turned around swiftly and left the room, bumping into Curt Monkenberg the moment he opened the door.

"Wasn't that Posener from the News?" With one swift glance he took in Jarni's bewildered face and the flowers on the dressing table. "Don't tell me he brought you this bouquet?"

"Of course he did," said Jarni aggressively. "Why shouldn't he?"

Curt Monkenberg gave Jarni a long look.

"If you can seduce this man-eating monster who slaughters politicians like cattle in his column, you have become a woman in the fullest sense of the word, little Jarni. There never was a lonelier wolf in the pack."

The crowd meeting after the première at the house of Finn, the architect of the new theater, was intoxicated by success even before alcohol could spur them to greater enthusiasm. Lind, the composer of the evening, played one of his wild atonal suites, and Curt Monkenberg and Jarni danced. She did not love him any more, and sometimes she thought she never had, not even on the day on which she had surrendered herself to the future he offered. But she was tied to him by sentimental tenderness as a link between the Jarni who sold goats to keep from starving and the Jarni who had become a star. She gave herself sufficiently to the wild rhythm to feel his desire, reawakened by her success, like a stimulant, and she drank fast to gain relaxation from the exasperating tension of her part in the evening's performance. But for some reason it did not work. In spite of the lightness of her body and the blur before her eyes she stayed wide awake and attentive. She saw Holt's disintegration, and the helpless bewilderment of a newly acquired girl friend who still was unaccustomed to his particular form of alcoholic anesthesia. She saw Arina watch Bolung's bombastic megalomania with eyes that had the evil glint of cocaine, and she noticed that Finn, the architect, and Dorant, the actor, were making a kind of love to each other which no one but she seemed to find ridiculous. In an attempt to subdue her critical brains she withdrew from the party and wandered aimlessly through the house.

It was quiet in Finn's studio, which was far removed from the celebrating crowd. On a slowly rotating platform in the middle of the room stood the model of a new Health Center for Berlin workers. Jarni watched the steady turning of the model and her nerves calmed down. There was a hospital with a revolving solarium and gigantic windows of special glass filtering the ultraviolet rays of the sun. Clinics, laboratories, and staff quarters were spread out in far-flung wings. Surrounding the buildings was a garden, partly covered by ceilings with artificial sun lamps for winter use, a swimming pool, open rest halls, and playgrounds. It was protected from the dust and noise of the city by a circular building, directly accessible from the street and housing administration and doctor's offices, advisory bureaus, gymnasiums and lecture halls.

"It's magnificent, isn't it?" said a voice behind Jarni. A man was standing by the wall, and the first thing she noticed about him was the impeccable cut of his dress-coat and the flawless bow of his white tie. The correctness of his appearance was so perfect as to be provincial.

"Yes, it's fascinating." Jarni sat down in a steel-tube chair because she was not quite sober enough to stand steadily.

"You are Miss Dallmann?" He had deep blue melancholy eyes. "I'm Leopold Kettler." And he bowed very correctly.

"It seems Finn never misses a problem," mused Jarni. "You should have seen the village center he built near Rupin." She took a pencil and drew the ground plan on the back of a cigarette box. "It was a perfect solution."

"You have learned that plan by heart," said Mr. Kettler in a voice that had the same quality of soft melancholy as his eyes.

"It interested me at that time, I guess, like a poem with a deep and important message."

"You have known Mr. Finn for a long time?"

"Yes, for a long time."

While her eyes followed the slowly turning model she tried to suppress a frightening feeling of being very old that had come over her with the words: a long time. Vainly she tried to remember who she had been before she had tasted the bitter sensations of Finn's world, and vainly she tried to forget the price she had paid for knowing the creator of this center for health and clean happiness.

"I wish you wouldn't look so sad." Jarni had nearly forgotten about Mr. Kettler. "You should be happy today, you had a great success."

Jarni tried to answer by an obliging smile.

"I watched you all evening, Miss Dallmann. You're a fine actress. You have a personality that's different. You don't seem to belong to the crowd out there."

"Where else do I belong?" Did he dare to doubt her equality with the best of the men and women who had made the new Berlin famous?

"There are towns in Germany which are waiting for actors like you to give them a new art. Munich, for instance, where I live, or Hamburg, or Frankfurt. There you could be a real star, have a real superiority."

"I am a real star, at least that's what people think who count," said Jarni, aggressively deprived of inner reserve by the champagne she had been drinking. "How can Hamburg, or Frankfurt, or Munich compare with Berlin? This model, the play tonight, new music, architecture, painting, the discoveries in science and technique, all that belongs here and to no other place on earth, and we, all of us, we were the ones to create this new world."

Her depression was gone. Like a bull at the sight of a red cloth, she, the citizen of the great metropolis, was incensed by the mere mention of the provinces. It did not matter that Curt Monkenberg was drunk tonight, that Finn had been vile, or that Arina kept herself going with dope. It was their work, their effort, their success Jarni loved in them.

"Good night, Mr. Kettler," she said too quickly and flippantly. "I have to go back where I belong. Thanks just the same for your compliments. The trouble is they don't fit me."

"Good night, Miss Dallmann," said the soft-spoken Mr. Kettler. "And whenever you feel that Berlin does not keep her promise — pardon my mentioning the possibility — remember Munich."

*

For a short month Jarni lived in the dazzling light of confirmed success, which was radiant enough to eclipse the many arduous steps that lay in its shadow. Never had life been more beautiful; and in this new feeling of affirmation and pride she remembered her uncle and decided to renew their friendship.

She found him alone, his wheelchair standing on an open terrace overlooking a rock garden. His joy at seeing her was great.

"I've often wondered," he said with a look that was sad and affectionate, "why the wrong people always seem to be chained together in families. Think what it would have meant to me had you been my daughter. Vera, I guess, would have made a splendid addition to the Dallmann clan, if they were not too plebeian for her aristocratic personality." With a quick angry gesture he erased his last words. "But let's not spoil the rare present of your visit, little Jarni." His face looked suddenly old, furrowed by deep lines of disappointment that gave him a strong resemblance to his sister Justine. "What did you think of our cousin Posener?"

"Cousin?" Jarni's heart throbbed.

"Yes, cousin, though a very distant one. I had a hunch sister Justine never told you about this so-called dark spot in our ancestry because you behaved so terribly reserved the other night. And Posener asked me to keep it quiet as long as you didn't mention it yourself. Believe it or not, he thought it might embarrass you. My mother — she died long before you were born — was a Posener right here from Berlin, daughter of a great doctor and revolutionary. Werner is his brother's grandchild and therefore a kind of third cousin of your mother's and mine."

"Posener?" A memory came back to Jarni. "Was Ephraim Posener my great-grandfather?"

"Certainly."

"I have his Lessing edition. I always thought it had been bought from a second-hand dealer because there was this unfamiliar name on the fly leaf."

"He was a great authority on Lessing. He wrote an excellent biography which I possess. Just a second; I'll show it to you."

It was Vera who answered her father's bell. She was shocked at seeing Jarni but she restrained herself admirably.

"Jarni Dallmann, is that really you? What a pleasant surprise. I hope you're not angry because I played that little trick on you the other night." And quickly turning to her father:

"Please, papa, let me take her upstairs. This is too amusing a coincidence. There is a childhood friend of Jarni's visiting me. Only a few minutes ago we were talking about her. Please, papa, they must meet each other."

With keen curiosity Jarni followed her cousin, who raced up two flights of stairs as if she were afraid to miss the sensation of her life. Squealing with laughter she shoved Jarni through a door.

"Is it a surprise, or isn't it?"

In the middle of the room stood Jarni's brother Jasper.

"Why don't you say something? Come on, let's celebrate this happy reunion." Vera dropped in a chair. "Now be good children and give each other a kiss."

With stiff movements Jarni and Jasper sat down, and simultaneously reached for cigarettes to conquer their embarrassment. Jarni did not like this surprise. She had not seen her brother since the night when he had mistaken a Communist attack on the Pine Hill gas works for a personal ambush, and had left the house, driven by her relentless scorn. Her negative attitude toward him had lost aggressiveness since then. The richness of her life, its complete severance from her old existence, gave her a feeling of great superiority over everything connected with her past. She was no longer interested in her brother's political folly. She wanted to forget him.

Jasper reacted differently. He was speechless not so much from surprise at seeing his sister, as at her changed personality. He had never quite overcome his love for her in the dim days of early childhood. Now as she stood before him, grown-up and beautiful, a wave of the old affection swamped his heart and made him silent.

"Come on," pouted Vera, a spoiled child who had been cheated out of a show. "Don't sit like Buddhas. Talk to each other. You've met before, haven't you, and you were great enemies, I've been told."

There's still a clan feeling in me, Jarni realized with amazement. She would not be provoked to air family feuds before her cousin's greedy eyes; she would simply ignore differences of opinion.

"Nice to see you, Jasper," she said with a determined smile. "You have changed a good deal. It seems you're a man now."

Jasper was quite receptive to this flattery.

"Seems I am. I passed my state examination two weeks ago. I'm through with learning."

"I thought you had joined up with the Reichswehr? I'm sure mother mentioned that in a letter two or three years ago."

Jasper and Vera exchanged a look.

"That was the plan but it didn't materialize. I had to interrupt my studies on account of the inflation and I spent half a year with the army on a — well, on a technical mission, so to speak. But I went back to the university a year later and now I'm ready."

"And what are your plans?" Jarni was full of apprehension lest he might try to work in Berlin.

"I'm looking for a job as a statistician. The gang running the state now has a mania for statistics. I might butt in on some of their surveys."

The way he said "the gang" irked Jarni but she had resolved to remain calm.

"Do you have any particular department in mind?"

"It's nice to see how much interest you take in me." He tried to smile but smiling did not come easily to him. His thin lips had a downward curve and his face an expression of perpetual objection. He had the expressive eyes of all the Dallmanns but his seemed more sinister than sincere because they were jet black.

"I don't care for a government job if I can avoid it. I've been told that the Berlin News plans a survey on labor conditions in the provinces: employment, political views, economic standards, and stuff like that. That's where I'm trying to get in. I have a recommendation to one of the editors. What's his name?"

He turned to Vera for an answer.

"Posener."

"Right, Posener, political editor of the news, one of those garlic-smelling Palestinians who try to tell German people how to run the country."

Angered, Jarni forgot her determination not to be provoked.

"Who gave you this recommendation?" she asked sharply.

"Some Jewish fellow at the university," Jasper replied lightly. "You know, Jews stick together like burrs. One has to use them as long as they're in on every good deal."

"Look out what you're saying!" Jarni blazed with fury. "You still seem to live in the old rotten murdering days of the Free Corps. But we don't. This is a civilized town where nobody is allowed to sling mud. We don't care for race distinctions. We don't know any other distinctions than quality and achievement. And besides — " The actress in her had saved the trump for the very end. "Besides, Werner Posener is a relative of ours."

"No! Don't!" Vera von Neel screamed as if Jarni had drawn a gun. "Don't tell him, for Heaven's sake!"

Jarni did not look at her, she looked at her brother with open sarcasm.

"Better be careful, brother, in which direction you spit."

But Jasper Dallmann would not take it as easily as that. He had to deny it. There was no other way of self-preservation.

"You're lying as usual," he cried. "You'll have to prove that first."

"And if I can?"

For a moment he stared at Jarni and something in her face made him doubtful.

"If you're right," he said, stressing each word portentously, "if our blood is polluted, I shall know my duty as an old soldier." From his hip pocket he produced a pistol, weighing it on the flat of his hand.

"Darling!" With a dash across the room Vera knocked the weapon to the floor. "Oh my darling, you must not think of anything like that. I love you, no matter who you are." She had taken his head between her hands, covering his face with kisses. "It's not true, darling, believe me, it's not true. Do you hear me? Oh darling, say something."

But Jasper did not respond to her caresses. With a white motionless face he picked up the pistol, clicked his spurless heels in military fashion to Vera, and left.

Uncle Andreas was still on the terrace when Jarni came downstairs. A lamp shone on his sleeping face that was peaceful and very tired, and without waking him up she left the house.

XI. Eclipse

After Werner Posener had read the letter introducing his visitor, he folded it slowly and handed it back to the young man.

"Your coming was announced to me, Mr. Dallmann. Professor Levin of the State University wrote to me, and though he did not go into great detail about your personality, he stressed your skill as a statistician. This morning Miss von Neel called up, recommending you warmly."

Jasper did not know what to answer. He felt a vague gratefulness for Vera's support, but at the same time he suspected that her desire to see him get a job was connected with her intention of marrying him.

"I have brought some of my last term's work," he said, opening a brief case. "I hope it will show my ability, so that recommendations will not be necessary."

"Please don't bother," said the editor. "We are not in a position to employ you."

Jasper's pale face turned a shade paler. "Is the vacancy filled?"

"Yes, the vacancy is filled." Werner Posener got up from his chair to end the interview, but Jasper did not move. With a voice that sounded harsh with disappointment he said:

"I was told yesterday that the position was still open. May I ask for an explanation?"

"You may not!" Posener looked with meditative curiosity into the young man's face. "The position is filled. We are not obliged to give details to applicants." He reached out for the bell to ring for his secretary, but Jasper covered the button with a quick move of his hand.

"One moment, please," he said. "I want to get this straight. You don't want to give me the job. Is that it?"

"If you insist, yes."

"You've heard something about my past. Is that it?"

"Yes."

"That fine sister of mine tipped you off. She's a great friend of yours, isn't she? She told me only last night that I have the profound honor of being related to you."

The cocky contempt in his words annoyed Posener.

"Your sister told me nothing." His voice rose from word to word. "I didn't even know she was aware of our distant relationship, of which, I must say, I am not particularly proud. It took neither an informer nor any special intelligence to find out that you were a member of the Baltic Fighters, and that you were dishonorably discharged from the Reichswehr on account of subversive activities." He opened a drawer and contemptuously flung some clippings on the desk. "These vulgar and illogical attacks against our paper and my editorials were written by you. The humble "—nn" at the end of each article stands for Dallmann and no one else."

Jasper bit his lip. "Spy!" he said.

"Isn't that too bad;" Werner Posener had overcome his anger. "This newspaper dares to investigate the background of prospective employees, and has an instinctive prejudice against paying its own enemies. But never mind. You may have a chance elsewhere. I guess I'm one of the few Germans who can recognize a traitor when I see one. To hire you, Mr. Dallmann, for the investigation I am planning would be as wise as making a goat the gardener's helper." He pressed the bell-button. "You may go."

Arina Colmer had been Jarni's guest for lunch, and was now sitting comfortably curled up in a leather chair.

"If only I knew what's eating you," she remarked watching Jarni pace the floor nervously. "You're the queerest creature I have ever met. You have fought and suffered and worked, and now that you have reached your goal and your name will be printed in nearly as large letters as mine, you act as if there were a pack of wolves at your heels."

"Perhaps there is," said Jarni, lighting a cigarette. "There are things going on in the provinces that drive me crazy with fear."

"What things?"

"A concentration of political reaction, a constant training of spies and saboteurs who are sent to undermine Berlin and what it stands for."

"You must be crazy! Why do the provinces interest you and what have they to do with your work? Why do you waste even a thought on the backwoods of Germany, to say nothing of all this apprehension and nervousness? Are you Hindenburg, or Gertrud Baeumer, or what?" She poured herself some hot coffee and curled up again. "I thought I had done a good job telling you what we are working for here in Berlin, but I give up."

"Why?" asked Jarni, hoping for an explanation of her heartsickness.

"I have watched you for some years and I am terribly fond of you. That's why I see you more clearly than others. You live here, you share in all we do, and you have learned to play our game. But it doesn't seem to get under your skin. You always seem to draw from resources outside our world. Perhaps you don't relish our enjoyments as much as we do, but you certainly do not share our fight."

"What fight?"

"The fight to be the first, the only one to prove the unique. The fight against anything and anyone standing in our way, including the fight against man as the lover who eternally stands between us and our work. You, Jarni, preserve yourself from all that by the outrageous conceit of saints and fools who believe that nothing can really happen to them, that they are taken care of by destiny."

Jarni listened attentively, lighting and snuffing out one cigarette after another.

"Something is happening now," she said slowly, "which is more important than all I did and hoped for here in Berlin. But it's happening in another world. Yes, Arina, I guess you're right, part of me always stayed out of Berlin on that other plane. That is what makes me feel so miserably split up now."

The telephone rang and Jarni, who was used to incessant calls, answered it absent-mindedly.

"Hello?"

"This is Werner Posener. Still remember me?"

"Why of course," said Jarni after a second of stunned surprise. "Of course I remember you." A hot wave ran over her face and body.

"I — " The voice on the phone seemed to hesitate. "I wonder whether you will be free tonight after your performance. There is something I want to talk over with you."

"Of course I'll be free." Jarni's voice was low and excited. "Shall we meet at the stage entrance?"

She had hardly put down the receiver when Arina burst out. "So that's it, you're in love for a change. That's all the big talk about another world and another plane. I should have known. Tell me one thing. Does your brand new interest in the provinces mean that you are in love with some provincial yokel?"

"That's absurd." Jarni turned her back to Arina, looking out of the big French window. "That's completely ridiculous. How can you say anything as stupid as that?" Arina watched her with narrowed eyes.

"Now look here, little Jarni, you can fool others but not me. I wish you had seen your face when the telephone rang. First the shock that made your face white, and then a blush which must have colored the soles of your feet crimson. Jarni, poor hopeless stupid Jarni. God help you, you're in love."

"I've met that man twice," Jarni tried to defend herself, "and I have never talked to him more than perhaps ten sentences all told. He's acrimonious, he limps, and he has no interest in women, only in politics. To fall in love with him would be plain suicide."

"Perhaps it is," said Arina.

Jarni had chosen a restaurant outside the sphere of theater and film in the old, practically abandoned, center of Berlin. It was a wine cellar where a hundred years before E. T. A. Hoffmann had written his fantastic fables of *Klein Zaches* and *Kater Murr*. Jarni knew the place by reputation only and was amazed to find it crowded by men who had the unmistakable air of Prussian aristocrats. Werner Posener selected a table in the last room of the spacious basement and ordered food and the light Moselle Jarni loved to drink. For a while they tried to bridge the aloofness they felt by small talk but they soon ran out of words, and Jarni felt again the disquieting intensity of his eyes concentrated upon her face.

"Why did you call me?"

"You disliked it?"

"I was very happy about it."

There was a smile around his finely shaped mouth but his eyes stayed unlighted by it.

"It's about your brother."

The illusion that his call had been meant for her alone came to an end, hurting her as if the white lilies sent by Uncle Andreas had taught her nothing.

"I wanted to talk to you because I'm leaving town tomorrow for a trip through the provinces which may keep me away for some weeks. I felt you should know that I had an unpleasant conversation with him. He wanted a job with the News and I turned him down. He is sure you told me of his shady political past, and I doubt that he was convinced by my denial. In any case, he is dangerously angry, and I wish you would keep away from him. I hate the idea that you should be pestered by his hysterical urge for revenge."

"Do you think he's planning trouble?" Jarni asked with a heavy heart.

"I don't know yet, but I'll find out. I'll investigate the background of this nationalistic wave and its representatives here in town. There are symptoms of mass hysteria which I don't like."

"Tell me, please, did you always know that we are related?"

"Of course, if you can call it related."

"But why didn't you mention it at Uncle von Neel's house?"

Posener looked half guilty and half amused.

"There were several reasons, I guess. First of all to have a great-granduncle in common is not a very close relationship, and then, you see, I'm a rather ugly bird, nothing for a young actress. I was afraid you might feel an obligation."

Jarni was touched by this confession, which was simple and manly.

"I wish I had met you when I came to Berlin. It might have saved me from what you called the other day 'political innocence,' but which actually is nothing but irresponsibility."

"Don't fall into self-accusation," he said quietly. "There are others who can be blamed for neglecting political responsibility." He looked over her hair, her face, her hands. "I like to think that beauty and grace have a right of their own, and that they are preserved for us, the toilers, to enjoy. You have beautiful hands, cousin Jarni."

Jarni smiled. It was as if of all the compliments and flatteries she had heard in the years past, only this one, the reference to her hands, was valid.

They stayed till closing hour, and had already walked half way up the stairs leading to the street level, when a drunken voice howled: "Wait a minute."

Jarni heard staggering steps and, whirled around brutally, she stared into the swollen face of Dorant.

"Just let me take a look at you," said the actor, and, giving a long whistle, he shouted down to the entrance of the cellar: "You win. She's your cousin. She really is keeping company with that Jewish swine."

The swaying figure of Harold Dallmann leaned against the door of the restaurant, but before he could move Werner Posener knocked Dorant down the steps, and they reached a cab.

He did not know whether the vulgarity of Dorant's attack or the sudden encounter with her cousin had caused Jarni's collapse. He only knew that he had to stop her crying, which was silent and hopeless. As if charity had been his calling all his life, he laid her down on a couch and covered her with a robe.

"It's all my fault." He was sitting at her side like a doctor watching his patient. "I shouldn't have taken you out. I'm a marked man. I have been shadowed by these hoodlums for months. I'm no company for you."

Jarni smiled through the veil of her tears. "You think I believe what you are saying? I don't. I know as well as you do that it's not you they were after. It's I; it's this eternal feud in our family that poisons everything." She sat up. "I wish you would believe me when I say that I was very happy tonight."

He took both her hands and his eyes were warm.

"If that's true, Jarni — if you really were happy — " He rose and walked to the window, through which shone the million lights of Berlin. Jarni followed him and, standing at his side, she watched the fleeting reflections in his eyes.

"You must believe me when I say that I wanted you to come. It's so important." She looked at him pleadingly.

With both his hands resting on her shoulders he held her at arm's length in the direct focus of his searching glance.

"Important? How important?" His voice was almost a whisper. "What can you know about the importance of love?"

"Only the blind man knows the importance of light. It's the cripple who longs most for perfection." She had already said it when she realized with burning shame that she had forgotten about his limping foot. "Werner, I didn't mean to hurt you! Please, please — I — it's I that I meant. I'm the cripple, not you."

Cupped around her cheeks his hands drew her tear-washed face close to his.

"I love you, Jarni," he said simply. "Poor heart, crippled by too much brains, poor brains, crippled by too much beauty." And he kissed her lips, filling her with a never experienced amazement. It was the fulfillment producing the hunger and the hunger reaching out for more fulfillment, which withdrew into depths that could be reached only by closer entwining of breath and body. The lifting up and falling down — still the quest for completion, so wanted, and so dreadful in its finality. There was no memory, no trace of lives and bodies known before, nothing but the nameless amazement over the new, the deep, endlessly new — till it had reached the point where only the exhalation of a last breath separated them from the crest, and the drowning surge into the dark vacuum of inexistence. The one heart-beat of hesitation that precedes complete surrender re-established Jarni's conscience, stemming the torrent of their united desire. With the first memory that linked this moment with past experiences, she felt the danger of quick fulfillment.

Carefully, as if their bodies had been one and had now to be separated with the utmost care, she freed herself, allowing nothing but the touch of their fingertips to carry on the abating waves.

"No, Werner, not now. Not yet. I told you I was blind. Let me discover the light slowly.

He stood with his eyes closed.

"Werner, do you understand me? Do you understand why this has to be different? I have to earn this fulfillment."

He opened his eyes and smiled with an abysmal resignation.

"I will try to understand, Jarni. Forgive me for having reached beyond my life."

And he bowed down to kiss her hands before he left.

She was beginning to untangle herself from a restless sleep when the maid came into her bedroom to ask whether she would receive Mr. Dallmann. Jasper, his talk with Werner, his menacing words at Vera's house, flashed through her mind. Her first impulse was to slip back between the covers, and to close her ears to reality, but she knew it would be senseless. This had to be fought out.

She dressed hurriedly and went into the big lightflooded studio. Meek-eyed beside the door stood not her brother, but Harold Dallmann.

"I didn't mean it last night, I'm sorry," he stuttered without taking the time to greet her. "I didn't want to bother you, really. I was drunk and the whole thing was Dorant's idea. I didn't want him to talk so filthily."

Jarni looked coldly into his gray wasted face that was still young.

"You didn't come here to apologize, did you?" His presence disgusted her.

The man squirmed.

"Of course not, I mean, I am sorry, of course, honestly, I am." He obviously had not the courage to come to the point.

Jarni wanted to be alone.

"Either speak or get out of my house," she said sharply.

"All right," said Harold. "Since you ask me. It's about Jasper."

"I have nothing to do with him." Jarni spoke quickly, as if she could annul a life-long relationship.

"I know. But after all, he's your brother. He was crazy about you back home when you were children. And he still thinks a lot of you. That's why he resents seeing you go around with men like Posener."

"It's none of his or your business, understand? And now get out of here!"

The boy was undergoing a hard struggle. He had come to ask Jarni's help, but her attitude made it impossible for him to speak. It was only his utter despair that finally drove him to unburden his heart in a torrential confession.

"He's going to marry that cousin of yours, that Vera. She doesn't love him. She is as cold as a rock. She just wants to be married, that's all. You'd think Jasper would realize what's what. But no! He suddenly talks rubbish about a man's duty toward the state to raise a family and get settled and what not. And I — " He stopped, his face twisted. "I'm going to lose him to that bitch. I know how women are. They don't understand friendship between men. They only know their own petty interests. I can't lose him. He is the only friend I have." His voice rose in grief and despair. "Don't you see? We've stuck together all these years. He's all I have. We've shared everything. We — well, I guess you can't understand that, but damn it, we loved each other. And now, a woman is to come between us." He turned around, pressing his knuckles against his mouth.

"Why didn't you tell him instead of me?" asked Jarni, perplexed by this new facet in the family gem.

"I tried to," said Harold drearily. "But he won't listen. 'Pull yourself together,' he said. 'It's time you became a man' and stuff like that. He can talk, he has girls. But as for me — I had only him."

Tears stood in his eyes.

"And what do you think I can do about it? You know how we stand."

"You must talk to him," cried Harold, beside himself with fury and fear. "If he marries that bitch I shall quit." His face suddenly lit up with malicious satisfaction. "I'll let him down, that's what I'll do. He'll have to settle his own account if I let him down, that damned traitor. Then he can look for another killer in the family while he keeps his own hands clean to pat his bitch."

"Whom are you going to kill?" asked Jarni slowly, afraid to rouse him from his madness before she knew the answer. But it was too late. Harold's face, flushed with fury and defiance, grew ashen again.

"I didn't say anything," he stammered. "Not a thing. Why do you ask me? What do you mean? I didn't say a single word — "

And then realizing the futility and the peril of his presence, he said despairingly: "I guess you won't talk to him anyway," and he shuffled out of the room.

That night while Jarni rested in her dressing room during the interval of Holt's play, Curt Monkenberg came in.

"They tell me you have asked for a substitute to take over your part. Will you please tell me what that means?"

Jarni knew from the very beginning that all explanations would be useless.

"I must leave Berlin for three days."

"Now, at the beginning of your best season? You must be mad."

"I'm not." Jarni was irked by his tone. "It's terribly important that I go. There is nothing that can change my mind."

"Oh, yes, there is," said Curt with cryptic triumph in his eyes. "I didn't mean to tell you before it's definite, but in view of this insane determination to ruin your career I'd better tell you now."

"What is it?"

"Bolung is considering you seriously for the leading part in 'Atlantis,' and he'll give you a half-hour test the day after tomorrow. It's a two million mark production. What do you say now?"

"Nothing, except that I can't take the test if Bolung can't wait for another week."

Curt Monkenberg jumped up from his chair.

"Look here, Jarni Dallmann, there are limits to a star's whims. I haven't labored like a slave for you to see all we have done destroyed by an attack of megalomania. You can not afford to let me down, Jarni, not yet. You either change your mind here and now, or we are through with each other and I will sue you for breach of contract."

Jarni looked into his quick intelligent eyes, now sparkling with anger, and she realized that he knew nothing of her — as if they had never met.

"Why always such big threats, Curt? You must believe me when I say that only something of desperate importance would keep me away from my work. Instead of making it more difficult, why don't you try to help me get these three days off? I must save a life, and if I don't do it I shall not only destroy mine but also a couple of other lives."

"In Heaven's name!" He dug his ten fingers into his hair. "Can't you give up these imbecile delusions? I have kept out of your private life as much as I could, and I have accepted gratefully the time you allowed me to share with you, but this is something different. If you start that love business again, sacrificing your career and mine for some bum who takes advantage of your hopeless romanticism, I'll get mad. This is business and not a side show. I have more than thirty thousand marks tied up in contracts for you, to say nothing of my own prestige. If you go through with this plan I'll wreck your career. Think it over till after the performance. I mean what I said. See you later."

But Jarni knew it was all over.

*

The speeding train rushed her into an adventurous rediscovery of the land she loved. It all still existed, only Jarni had forgotten about it: trees growing in thick dark groves, or bending in orchards under the fruits of autumn; a windswept field with golden grain stacked together in rich sheaves; children flying kites on the stubble, and women in gay bandanas gleaning the last stalks; the fiery sunset of an October evening behind the spires of old towns, peaceful and alluring, without too much detail of man and beast.

The train stopped at a small junction. Jarni went to the end of the platform where the tracks ran out into open space in bright silvery ribbons. She inhaled the air of the fall afternoon, peculiar to this and to no other land, the mixed scents of falling foliage, potato fires, and ripe apples. With a loving glance she took in all the peace, fertility, and contentment of the country that still was hers, no matter how long she had forgotten its enchantment and she felt justified in the mission she was now embarked upon.

*

Amos and Justine showed no exaggerated joy when they welcomed their youngest child. Their lives had drifted too far apart. But there was a grateful acknowledgment of her return, no matter what the past had been or what might stand between them in the future. Jarni was amazed to find her parents looking younger rather than older. The marks of undernourishment were gone, and though they both were well over sixty now, Amos and Justine moved and talked with the vivacity of people who have an aim in life.

"How's work, father?"

"All right. Can't complain. I had to learn a lot of new stuff but that doesn't matter. I do my share. That's the main thing."

If Justine hadn't lifted her forefinger to her lips in rather clumsy fashion to caution her husband, Jarni would have thought that her father was still constructing bridges and railway tunnels.

"What are you doing right now?" she insisted. "Are you still with the state railway?"

"Oh no," said Amos. "They had no use for an old hand like me. They gave me the sack right on my sixtieth birthday. They're too smart for an old fellow." He gave his wife an irritated look. "It's nothing I can't talk about, Justine. I'm working for the airlines now, the commercial airlines, you understand. They are expanding rapidly. I've been doing some hangar construction for them, hangars for commercial airplanes, you understand."

That was all Jarni could learn. He would specify neither his employers nor the location of his work.

With nostalgic delight Jarni enjoyed the old unchanged supper menu of fried potatoes, smoked herring, pickled string beans, goat cheese, and mint tea. The conversation dealt cautiously with such neutral subjects as Jarni's work, her future plans, and the fate of relatives and friends in town. Only someone knowing the stormy past of family relationships in this house could have appreciated the tactful efforts of these three people to retain a friendly and undisturbed atmosphere.

After the meal Justine settled down to her usual job of mending socks while Amos brought in a pile of old envelopes. He started slitting the sides with a pen knife, stacking the square front panels in a neat pile.

"What are you doing that for, father?" asked Jarni.

"To save paper. Remember all the envelopes I made you cut up when you were children? Well, I used every scrap of it during the paper shortage of the last war, and I was mighty glad to have it."

Jarni suddenly remembered the strange saving mania of her father; how he had made his assistants brush the eraser crumbs from the drafting boards into empty cigar boxes which had been stacked ceiling-high in his office; how he had cut the uppers from worn-out shoes to use over again as repair material, and how old nails, bits of cord, wire, and piping, scraps of metal and cardboard, and the leftovers in innumerable paint cans had crowded all the closets.

"Are you still collecting eraser 'dust?' " asked Jarni, intending to be humorous.

"Of course. I already have eleven boxes. During the last war I got twenty good erasers from the melted crumbs when no one else had any rubber."

"But the war is over. I mean, why are you still saving all these things?"

"For the next war," said Amos Dallmann, smiling happily at the nice clean inside of a large business envelope.

Freya Dallmann was on duty, and shortly before midnight Jarni went to call for her at the Pine Hill hospital. While she waited in the dark entrance hall which served as reception room, ambulance entrance, and hospital office, she thought of Finn's new health center which would soon serve the people of Berlin, and she felt something like shame. For the first time she suspected that there could be too much perfection in one spot, too much light for so much shadow. Beside her on the hard wooden bench sat a young woman who was writhing with delivery pains. Her nervous husband tried to persuade the elderly nurse behind the desk to admit her to a room.

"It's so drafty here," he pleaded desperately. "She might catch cold, and it might be too late."

"Never mind," said the nurse, not roughly, but without a spark of interest. "First babies aren't that fast. She can't go upstairs until the bed is vacated. We had to take in an emergency case last night."

There was no getting away from noise or smell in the building. The odors of sick people, medicines, disinfectants, and food lay thickly in the air. The noise of slamming doors, night bells, the moaning of a woman, and the unrestrained screaming of a child blended in a climax of restless agitation. The young woman was groaning now, her hands clasped around her inflated abdomen.

"Good Lord!" she suddenly shrieked. "Good Lord, look!" She held on to her husband, who had turned white, staring at her stockings, which were soaked.

"What's the matter?" asked the nurse.

"Quick, quick!" cried the man. "It's coming!"

The nurse seemed convinced now. Without haste she turned off the light at the reception desk, locked the drawers, and put a paperweight on some folders. With a professional grip she seized the woman's right arm, and put it around her shoulder.

"You take the other arm," she said to the bewildered man. "Let's go." Slowly they dragged the panting woman up the high steps, leaving a wide liquid trail on the floor.

They had hardly disappeared when Freya came down. Jarni greeted her hurriedly. She was so excited about what she had seen that she wanted nothing but an explanation.

"Is there no elevator in the building?"

"Oh yes," said Freya. "But we are not allowed to use it after 8 P. M."

"And why did that poor creature have to wait down here until it was nearly too late?"

"The maternity ward is much too small. They actually wait in line for the twenty-five beds. And there is only one doctor on duty at night. When somebody runs into trouble the whole community suffers."

"Who is head of the hospital now?"

"Old Doc March; you know him."

"But he must be eighty or a hundred," cried Jarni. "He was an old man when he came to our house twenty years ago."

"Of course he was."

"I thought you had a new director. You told me so the last time I was here."

"Sure, and he was good. In fact, he was too good. You know where he went?"

Freya looked at her sister with mocking triumph.

"He went to Berlin, like everybody who thinks he is too bright for our old town. They couldn't find anyone else to keep up with the work who would take the starvation salary they offer. So old Doc March got his job back." Freya now spoke with resigned bitterness. "The county is broke, dead broke. That's all there is to it."

She had grown much older in the four years since Jarni had seen her last. Her face was colorless, and wide strands of grey showed in her hair. She wore a gray coat, fashioned from soldier's uniform cloth, and a gray silk square over her white nurse's cap. She was like a gray cloud in a gray sky.

"What are you doing in town?" she asked, taking in with a quick envious glance the make-up on her sister's face, the silver fox scarf around her neck, and the two rings on her hand. "You seldom come any more."

"I'm glad to see you." Jarni tried to avoid an answer. "Are you still working in the same ward?"

"I should say not. You are not the only one who has done well. I am in charge of the operating room now, and I do a lot of field work."

"Field work?"

"We train auxiliary nurses, and we give first-aid courses for civilians."

"For civilians? For goodness' sake, why?"

"For the next war," said Freya as quietly as Amos, the father. "There was a great shortage of nurses during the last one. This time we shall be prepared."

" 'We?' Whom do you mean by 'we'? Who's giving these courses?"

"The Young German Order in collaboration with the party," said Freya.

"Which party?"

Freya looked at her sister as if she had just descended from Mars.

" 'Which party?' " she imitated her sister mockingly. "The National Socialist Party, of course."

"But that's illegal! The National Socialist Party has been prohibited by law."

"Not in Saxony," Freya triumphed. "We here were the first ones to defy this outrageous decision of the Socis. Prussia will have to follow soon, you can take my word for it."

"Are you a party member?" asked Jarni, unable to believe her ears.

"Am I a member?" Freya stopped in the middle of the street. "What a question! Don't you know that my group, I mean my group in the Youth Movement, was the first nucleus of the party in this state? — I'll be a delegate to the Congress next spring," she added with pride.

Jarni wanted to speak, to voice all the contempt she felt, but she could not risk a quarrel. She had come for a purpose and she managed to keep the conversation on neutral ground until they reached the house.

"When are you going to work tomorrow?" she asked.

"At noon."

"Could we all have breakfast together?"

"Certainly," said Freya. "At 8 o'clock, if that's not too early for such a very fine lady as you."

When the house was quiet Jarni slipped out of the door into the garden. Despite the dark she found her way easily to the birch tree which still towered on top of the many terraces that formed the Dallmann property. But to climb it was no longer child's play. Had the trunk grown taller or had her muscles become stiff in the soft life of the city? When she finally reached the fork where once a seat had been fixed for her, she was hot and breathless and her hands and knees were bruised. She tried to pierce the night with her eyes, but only the river was distinguishable, a faint line of dull silver in the surrounding black. The lights of the town in the distance were dimmed by fog. There was no trace of St. John's spire, once so feverishly sought. Jarni tried to give herself to the complete quiet of the night, the gentle rocking of the elastic branches, and the memories awakened by the aromatic fragrance of withering leaves. But the threats of reality were louder than the singing darkness of the night. It was not worth the effort, she felt. The landscape of her childhood had been blotted out. To sit up here was a sentimental waste of time, like waiting for the return of a person long since dead.

She had just come back to her room when her mother knocked at the door.

"May I come in, Jarni?"

"Of course, mother."

Justine was still fully dressed. She had obviously waited for her daughter.

"Will you be warm enough, child? These fall nights are chilly."

She counted the blankets on the bed, tucking them more tightly under the mattress.

"Thank you so much, mother." Jarni was touched by her mother's concern. "I shall have a heavenly sleep." She started to undress.

"May I sit down a moment?" asked Justine after an awkward pause.

Jarni blushed and hurried to push the one comfortable chair in the small guest room nearer to the light.

"Please do, mother; of course. Wait a second. I'll take my gown."

"Don't mind me. You go right to bed. I just wanted to have a little chat with you. You seldom come any more."

Freya had used the same words. They sounded bitter.

"How long are you going to stay?"

"Two or three days." Jarni felt like a beggar who can offer only a shabby, insufficient present. "I have to start a new film soon. I actually should have started tests for it today," she hurried to explain, remembering that by leaving Berlin she had lost her part in Bolung's new film.

"Why did you come then?" asked Justine, a look of suspicion in her eyes, which had changed from green to gray in old age.

She knows, Jarni thought. She knows that I came for a purpose. So why avoid it?

"Mother," she said, feeling every muscle grow tense. "I came to have a talk with you — about Jasper, and it is terribly important that we try to understand each other."

Justine Dallmann's lips, puckered because of the loss of many teeth, disappeared in a straight line. She clasped her hands in her lap.

"What is the matter with Jasper?"

"Did he marry Vera von Neel?"

"Why does that interest you?"

"It doesn't interest me in the least. But there is that fool Harold Dallmann, Uncle Franz's son. He came to my house and worked himself into a frenzy of jealousy because of Jasper and Vera. Did you know he's a homosexual?"

Justine's wrinkled cheeks flushed. "That's gossip," she said angrily. "You'd better be careful how you talk."

"But he told me so himself. He cried like a baby because he had nobody to love but Jasper."

"Hush!" said Justine quickly. "Don't talk so loudly. Harold is a fool, and unfortunately he drinks a lot. What has his irresponsible talk to do with Jasper?"

It was plain to Jarni that her mother sensed a connection between Jarni's visit and something she knew about her son. Her questions were like tentacles exploring unknown territory. Jarni could have closed the conversation by contenting herself with having mentioned Harold Dallmann's visit, but she realized that this intimate talk offered better opportunities than the melodramatic family tableau she had intended to stage next morning.

"It has a lot to do with Jasper, mother. Harold said that he would not help Jasper go through with his plans if this marriage took place."

She watched her mother closely. There was open concern in the old face.

"What plans?"

The two women eyed each other like cats, each waiting for a sign of weakness in the other.

"You know," said Jarni, managing to adopt a confidential tone. "You know what they have been planning together." But Justine Dallmann was neither stupid nor sentimental. Her lack of intimacy with her youngest child prevented her from falling into the trap.

"They have no special plans that I know of. Theirs are the plans and hopes of millions of decent men and women throughout the nation. Harold is nothing but a fool if he makes his life's aim dependent on petty jealousy."

"A fine aim — to kill," said Jarni contemptuously. "But anyhow, let's not talk about that. Were Jasper and Vera married or not?"

"They were married last Sunday. And if you insist, I can tell you that we are not at all pleased with this match."

"But why?" marveled Jarni with false enthusiasm. "I think it's simply wonderful. Jasper, the national hero, and Vera, the standard-bearer of feudal aristocracy. It's simply stupendous."

Her mother reacted coldly to this exaggerated outburst. "And that's why you came here? To offer your insincere congratulations on your brother's marriage, and to tell me that Harold is a homosexual?"

By now Jarni was tired of this game of hide-and-seek. Her mother knew something, and if she did not react to indirect methods she might react to a direct assault.

"No, I did not come for that, mother." She sat up in bed, her arms around her knees, her eyes fixed on her mother's face. "I came here to warn you. Harold Dallmann told me that he would no longer serve Jasper as his gunman if Jasper married Vera. Since this marriage has taken place, he may have given up the idea of assassinating someone marked for death by Jasper, but I doubt that very much. Homosexuals are not capable of rational decisions. Harold is quite obviously in a state of bondage. He will do whatever Jasper tells him, even if he is mad with jealousy."

She paused, hoping that some reaction of her mother's would show how much she knew. But there was no trace of response in Justine's face, yellowish now and pitifully old.

"Look here, mother." Jarni tried a new tone of persuasion. "I know how close you and Jasper have always been. He must have told you about his plans. Did he marry here in Pine Hill?"

Silence.

"Did you talk to him about his future?"

No answer, no reaction; only the stubborn stolid defiance of an old peasant woman.

"Do you know that Jasper tried to get a job with the Berlin News and that Werner Posener, the editor, turned him down on account of his illegal activities?"

"Posener? He talked to Posener?" The profound shock in her mother's voice was genuine.

"Yes, he did, the day after I told him that Posener's father was a distant cousin of yours."

"You told him that?" Justine bent forward, her hands clasped around the arms of her chair. "You had the nerve to bare a stigma I have spent a lifetime hiding from everyone, even your father? Only you could do anything as base as that!"

Justine's hostility was so violent that Jarni recoiled. "Why did you have to do that?" Her mother's tone had changed to a whine. "Who told you?"

"Never mind who told me. Jasper talked so vilely and abusively of Werner Posener, of whom he was going to ask a favor, that I had to check him."

Justine covered her face with her hands, sobbing bitterly. "God!" she murmured. "God! if only I had known what he meant."

Jarni was tempted to consider this concern about a great-grandfather as utterly ridiculous, but her mother's collapse showed clearly that her brother had given a hint of his plans.

"Mother, will you listen to me, please? It's no use arguing whether or not I should have told Jasper about the Poseners. The fact remains that he knows it, and that he has reacted in a way which is very disquieting. He has obviously informed his obedient servant Harold that he wants a certain person liquidated, and I believe that this person is Werner Posener. I came here to tell you that, and to beg you to use all your influence with Jasper to prevent such a tragedy." Justine lowered her hands, showing a stricken but defiant face. "You must get in touch with Jasper right away, Mother, and you must see to it that he does not become a murderer."

Justine had regained her self-control. Her features had become as stony and impassive as before, but they had an added expression of contempt and arrogance.

"You and you alone will be to blame," she said. "You have started the avalanche. You should have known that your brother is much too proud to endure this stain on his honor. He is a soldier, and a soldier has to keep his shield clean. Whatever happens is your responsibility."

Jarni was horrified by her mother's ready acceptance of possible violence. She threw her blankets off and jumped out of bed.

"I don't care about your accusations, mother; they are ridiculous. But don't you realize what it means if Jasper, your own son, becomes a killer? I'm not talking about Werner Posener alone, though he is one of the finest, most capable men this country has produced. I'm talking about us, about the family. Mother, you can't take it like that if one of your children is about to ruin all our lives by committing a cold-blooded murder?" She was weeping with rage and despair.

"Who told you that Jasper is going to kill anyone? How dare you say such a thing about your brother?" Justine's voice was coldly reproachful. "Old soldiers acknowledge other standards of sacrifice and loyalty than your morally rotten world. If Harold should commit anything rash, don't you dare blame your brother. Blame yourself."

"Mother!" With strangling horror Jarni understood. "Mother! He couldn't do that. He couldn't deliver this poor idiot Harold to the gallows to satisfy his own pathological greed for revenge?" She gripped her mother's arm. "Answer me! Jasper couldn't do anything so low. He is — oh, mother, answer me; it's terribly important. Tell me what's on his and your mind. Tell me what you know before it's too late!"

"I don't know anything." Justine pulled the shawl closer around her shoulders, got up, and went to the door. "Men have their own ways," she said sternly, "and it is up to us women to serve them, and not to pass judgment on their ideas." She opened the door, and then, turning to face her daughter, she added: "Just one thing more. Don't think that you will further your cause by dragging father or Freya into your confidence. They know nothing, I repeat, absolutely nothing. I wish you would keep that in mind."

"You are a stranger in town?" said the old sexton, his sad black eyes scrutinizing the visitor's face.

"I am! I came to see the synagogue." The sexton took no steps to open the heavy old door. "May I ask why you want to see the temple?"

The stranger laughed, a little embarrassed. "Is that so unusual? It has the reputation of being old and beautiful."

"It certainly is," said the old man with humble pride. "Very old and very beautiful." He stopped for a moment. "Would you mind telling me your name, sir?"

"Posener, Werner Posener. I haven't much time; just an hour between trains. If you don't mind — "

The old man hurried now. With fingers trembling with age he turned the key in the heavy lock, mumbling apologetically:

"Sorry for the delay, sir, but we have had a lot of trouble recently: smashed windows and soiled tomb stones. I have to be careful. It's sacred property I am guarding." Opening the door he turned around with a warm smile on his sorrowful face. "But as a Posener, sir, you are welcome to pray here, very welcome indeed. You may stay as long as you wish. I'll leave the key in the door. And when you have finished, please, bring it back to my house. It's at the other side of the graveyard, right outside the high wall." He bowed and noiselessly closed the heavy door.

Werner Posener smiled forlornly as he slowly walked through the temple where his great-grandfather had served as a rabbi, and other Poseners before him, five generations in unbroken succession. He was welcome here, the old man had said, welcome to pray. He turned around to see whether the sexton was still there, watching to see whether the guest had really come to pray. For a moment it seemed to him as if someone were looking through the low window beside the door. But it must have been a delusion. He was alone. He did not have to hide the fact that he could no longer pray, neither here nor elsewhere, that he had just come between trains to visit the place where his forefathers had lived. His head was tired and his heart was heavy. His tour through the industrial districts of Silesia had revealed conditions which seemed to invalidate all the efforts made by his paper to fight reaction and the trend toward fascism. On the peak of a prosperity such as had not been known in Germany since 1913 there were two million unemployed men who had been thrown out of work by the highly specialized methods of new export industries that served no one but foreign creditors and big stockholders. The farm settlement program — meant to alleviate the plight of surplus labor — was progressing at a snail's pace, because its sponsors had to fight bitterly for each acre purchased from the aristocracy. Only a fraction of the army of the hungry and aimless had been supplied with a new chance to make good. Labor unions had shown shocking indifference to the plight of millions who no longer were able to pay union dues, half of them young lads who never in their lives had been offered the chance to have steady work. He had watched these boys roaming aimlessly over the countryside, or loafing in the alleys and backyards of cities; and he had seen them listen with hungry eyes to Fascist orators. He had heard weird tales about the terrorizing of labor by swastika gangs which undermined the quality of production; and his briefcase was full of Fascist propaganda leaflets picked up in farms and factories.

He suddenly felt the grave dignity of the synagogue as a burden on his chest. It was a beautiful old edifice, but it was too late for him to be redeemed by its spirit. He pushed the door open. Somewhat dazzled by the bright sunlight he stepped into the cemetery, long out of use. Soft green lawn spread evenly over mounds and paths, adorned now with a golden carpet of autumn leaves. He did not have to look far to find a Posener monument:

"Ephraim David Posener, Rabbi, died 1806," he read, and then this inscription: "Esther Amalia, deceased one year later, after forty-eight years of marriage."

What the stern solemnity of the temple had been unable to achieve this simple epitaph did. It loosened the tight grip of concern around his heart. He felt nostalgia, sweet, a little painful, but soothing at the same time, the nostalgia of a child who knows that he has a home not too far away. Aching conscience, the uncounted pricks of wounded pride and hurt self-respect which are the bitter price of racial assimilation — all the suppressed loyalty to his people — were healed by the proud confession: "Ephraim David Posener, Rabbi."

The bleak loneliness of his life as a man, his craving for love in a society which had allowed its women to become so conscious of their perfection that love was determined by nothing but physical congeniality, was fed and appeased by the romance of all romances: " — after forty-eight years of marriage."

Jarni's image had attained a mysterious union with the name on the epitaph. Five generations melted away, making her flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood. He laid bare before his fathers not only the many wounds and scanty victories of his own life, but the sorrows and perils of the Germany that for a thousand years had allowed his people to live in peace. Humbly and unashamed he listened to the message they had for him, the message that came from many tombstones testifying of roots in a country they too had loved. With a desire so powerful that it reached over the distance of many miles into Jarni's heart, he longed for her presence; he longed to be welcomed with her into a group which had known the supreme happiness of an organic community. Bowing his head he confessed his love, unaware of the gun that was already aimed at him.

The bullet hit him in the back of the head, leaving his face unmutilated so that it carried into death a concentrated expression of intense listening.

For a second Harold Dallmann watched the gate at the far end of the cemetery. His face was flushed with cruel lust as if the well-aimed shot had afforded him sensual pleasure. When nothing stirred he jumped over the two mounds separating him from the slumped body and turned it around. He stripped Werner Posener of all his valuables and his overcoat. A handkerchief, a notebook, matches, spectacles, and a hat he scattered carefully around the body and then he vanished over the high wall, his victim's coat wrapped in a tight bundle under his arm. His motorcycle stood a few hundred yards away on a narrow lane. He sped out of town and to the edge of a lake. Around a stone already prepared on the shore he tied the overcoat containing Werner Posener's wallet, watch, money, and scarf-pin. A second later he was riding along the water which still showed spreading rings of waves from the impact of the rock he had thrown into its depth.

Political motives behind the murder of the chief editor were ruled out when it became evident that all his valuables had been stolen, even his overcoat. It was a plain case of robbery, and the authorities launched the usual investigation of tramps and unemployed men in lower Silesia, with no result.

There was one man alone in all Germany who could have insisted upon a political investigation on the basis of evidence he himself could furnish, and this man was Andreas von Neel. When Jarni saw him a day after the papers had spread the news of Werner Posener's death all over the country, the last trace of suave optimism had disappeared from his face.

"I lost much more than my only friend," he said, "I lost the faith that there is a limit to the depravity of the political struggle. These were not the methods we learned to counter in our day. Even during the fiercest battles against Bismarck's 'Socialist Legislation' there was an unwritten agreement to keep political warfare free of criminal methods. I talked to party headquarters a minute ago. They have already been informed by the police that it is definitely a case of robbery. This trick to divert attention from the real assassins is so simple that it's nearly ingenious."

"But we can't stop here," said Jarni. "The political connections must be dragged into the open. I can testify to Harold Dallmann's visit at my house and to his threats, and you — "

"I was willing to do that, Jarni," interrupted the old man, "though it would have been the bitterest confession of my life. I too thought an investigation into Jasper's, Harold's, and Vera's lives would help to stamp out three enemies of the Republic. But the comrades at the party office convinced me that it would be a grave tactical mistake. I — well, I have been a kind of symbol for the Social Democrats, an incarnation of the party's struggle and final success. A lawsuit would drag the embarrassing details of my family life into court, and Communists as well as Fascists would use them as deadly weapons against our cause. My daughter's convictions, her hatred for me, the fact that I could not keep a notorious Fascist like Jasper from my house — all that, properly exaggerated, would furnish the opposition with the most desirable material against the party. That's why we must be silent, Jarni. Werner would be the first to understand that."

Jarni bowed her head.

"And we must sit still and endure it?"

"No, Jarni, not you! You're young, you can fight them with all the means at your disposal: intelligence, art, persuasion, and example. Don't give up fighting, Jarni, it's not for Werner alone; it's for Germany. I have only a few more weeks to live. I count on you, Jarni, to carry on."

Perhaps it was the same defense mechanism that had protected her all her life which threw a blanket over Jarni's mind. A stranger, she stood in her rooms designed for her by Finn, blind to their modern beauty. Aimlessly she pressed the button operating the folding door of white leather that closed off the studio from the dining room, feeling a distant wonder about the perfect construction and the spotless white of the flexible material. Her hand moved searchingly over a bronze sculpture by Archipenko, but her fingertips were numb. They no longer responded to the beautiful lines. Her books in shelves of chromium and glass — she reached for one of Holt's plays dedicated to her with a winged, devoted poem. But she dropped it like everything else, like the food she picked up in the small, perfectly planned kitchen, like the glass of brandy she poured for herself, like the sleeping drug she had intended to take. She lay on her bed, but her muscles stayed tense, her eyes open and blank, as at the moment when the radio had struck her with the news: "Werner Posener, editor-in-chief of the Berlin News, has been assassinated."

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It was past midnight when a kind of aim, an impulse to act, emerged from her paralyzed mind.

"I want my trunks," she said, talking into the house telephone. "Please have them brought up."

The night operator seemed puzzled.

"But it's nearly one o'clock, Miss Dallmann. The manager has the storeroom keys and he's asleep."

"Then please wake him up."

Mechanically she stuffed dresses, shoes, lingerie, books, papers into the two big wardrobe trunks which Curt Monkenberg had given her as a present and which she had never used. There had been no place to go, once one had reached Berlin.

Two men came to move the luggage, and Jarni saw it go with a feeling of numb panic. The air about her receded till breathing became a struggle. The walls started to spin, their bare surfaces passing before her eyes like white agonizing flashes. She rushed to the French window and flung it open, her forehead pressed against the low iron railing. Without losing consciousness she was like a tree which gives itself to the storm to avoid being broken by its might. She did not think of Werner Posener as a person, nor of the few hours they had shared. It was agony in its purest form, the completely passive endurance of suffering.

Arina Colmer, who had found the outer door of the apartment open, dragged Jarni from the window and forced her into a chair.

"Jarni, for heaven's sake, Jarni, what are you doing? Don't throw your life away like that. You can't do that. Do you hear me?"

Jarni looked at her with a white face, and a sharp vertical frown appeared on her forehead.

"What do you mean? Why do you push me around like that?"

"But darling." Agitatedly Arina took Jarni's cold hands. "I know what you wanted to do. But don't do it, please, Jarni!" She had tears in her eyes. "I know the terrible temptation to end one's life if one's career seems wrecked. But, Jarni, try a fresh start. Please try. Curt will make up if you tell him you were a fool, and Bolung might give you another chance."

Jarni withdrew her hands and a spark of understanding appeared in her eyes.

"End my life? Oh no, Arina, I didn't think of doing that!" She shook her head violently. "His death wouldn't be so horribly hard to bear if life weren't so important. Death is so hopelessly final." She looked out over the million lights. "I never could kill myself — not even now."

"He died?" asked Arina cautiously.

Jarni nodded, her gaze still fixed upon the night outside. "He was murdered."

"Who was it?"

Jarni shook her head. "It doesn't matter any more now," she said, getting up, "and it hurts me to speak."

She reached for her coat.

"Where are you going?" asked Arina, still suspicious of Jarni's intentions, but strangely intimidated by her changed personality.

"I must leave. My luggage has already gone."

"May I take you to the station?"

"No," said Jarni. "I'm taking my car. Good bye, Arina." With an effort she forced herself to smile. "I don't know yet where I'm going or whether I'll come back. But don't worry about me. I couldn't die because in death I would lose the memory of him and of all his life meant. I could not squander that. I must live because it's up to me to remember why he died."

XII. Ultimatum

“May I ask what made you decide to come to Munich at this unusual time of the season?”

Jarni looked away from the director’s glib face, searching for an explanation which would satisfy his curiosity without revealing the truth.

“Please understand me. I don’t want to intrude upon your private life.” The director made a tactful pause. “But you must admit the situation is quite unusual. Here you are, a young actress who has won the acclaim of Berlin, whose name has reached the headlines, and whose picture has even been on the cover of the ‘Illustrated Weekly’ and you offer me your services. I — ” he laughed proudly, “I know of course that I have a reputation of my own, but I’m not vain enough to believe that you would prefer my direction to that of Reinhardt or Jessner, or that you would prefer our Munich crowd to a Berlin audience.”

“The reasons for my leaving Berlin have nothing to do with my work. They are purely personal.”

“I understand,” said the director with insolent eyes.

“I came to you because I wanted to work.” Jarni was tired of offering her services and got up. “But I see that you can’t add to your personnel in the middle of the season. Good bye, Director.”

“You misunderstood me, Miss Dallmann. I simply didn’t have the courage to tell you how little I can offer in pay and opportunities. There are hardly any parts of importance I could give you without antagonizing players who have been with me for a long time. But if you want to come despite these meager promises, I would be only too happy!”

While he dictated to his secretary a contract between Jarni Dallmann and the Bavarian State Playhouse, her eyes surveyed incredulously the room and the man at the desk. She only half listened to the intricate clauses about stars' rights, working hours, leaves, and pay. Her mind was filled with speechless amazement at this German Court Theater, with a director in a velvet jacket, a black silk plastron, and hair showing the use of a curler. He fitted in perfectly with the voluptuously carved desk, impenetrable red silk drapes fringed with gold; with the inlaid tables and gilded chairs, the artificial bouquets, and the tremendous chandelier, its facets grimy with dust. There was an alcove behind the director's desk, half closed off by an artfully arranged lace curtain. A Récamier sofa, covered with faded damask, stood there and beside it a huge renaissance chair. A crowned eagle, carrying a coat of arms in its talons was perched on the high back, and a forbidding rope was tied between the richly carved arms. While the walls of the director's office were covered with pictures of actors and actresses in outdated costumes, the alcove displayed photographs of kings and princes. Among them Jarni recognized the familiar face of insane King Ludwig, and the fat, common figure of the last Prince Regent in Tyrolean garb.

"You agree to this arrangement?" asked the director. "It's the best I can do for you under the circumstances."

"I suppose so." Jarni had not followed the details of the contract. "I'm sure it's all right. But tell me, Mr. Director, why does the chair in the alcove have a rope across the seat?"

He turned around and got up, his hand caressing the eagle.

"His Majesty, and His Majesty's father, and later His Royal Highness the Crown Prince used to sit here when they had a little tête-à-tête with one of the actresses. We wouldn't consider it fitting if anyone else sat on this chair."

"But the couch is still in use?"

"Occasionally," smiled the director roguishly, twirling the right end of his waxed mustache.

It was by mere chance that Jarni found her new home in the thicket of the old park of Nymphenburg Castle. Still carried away by the tide of her unconquerable sadness, she had been wandering over tortuous ways, listening to the rustling of dead leaves under her feet, when a woman passed her, pulling a cart heavily loaded with dry branches. One of the protruding twigs caught Jarni's fur coat and tore a large hole.

"Oh my, oh my!" cried the little old woman. "Isn't that a shame!" She clutched and unclutched her fingers over her blue apron. "I hope the gracious lady won't hold me responsible for the coat. What a beautiful thing it is!" She touched the fur with gout-bent fingers. "It must have cost a good many Talers. It would be all up with me if I had to pay for it!"

"Of course you won't have to pay for the damage. It was my fault. I didn't step far enough out of the way. If you have a pin I can hold it together until I get it to a furrier in town."

"I can mend it," offered the little old woman. "If the gracious lady would come to our house over by the Badenburg I could repair it with needle and thread."

The one-story building looked like a lean-to set up against the Badenburg, one of the small elegant baroque castles scattered over the park, though it was separated from it by an evergreen hedge. There was a clay-paved corridor, opening into a dark kitchen. A door to the left led into a low-ceilinged room which served as living-room and bedroom. In a niche stood a wide bed with a canopy, piled high with quilts and embroidered pillows. The big wardrobe was beautifully carved and so was a cupboard which held in its racks plates, dishes, jugs, and cups painted and glazed with old Bavarian designs. The plank floor was scrubbed white, and small branches of fresh pine were scattered over it. A round green tile stove with reliefs depicting scenes from the Bible gave out an agreeable warmth, and beside it a baby was sleeping in a cradle adorned with multicolored pictures of saints and angels.

"What a fine strong baby!" said Jarni. "Is it yours?"

The old woman, looking up from her sewing, giggled and her wrinkled face blushed.

"It must be a funny world the gracious lady lives in if an old biddy like me can still have babies there. No, no, it's my grandson I'm taking care of."

A sweet smell of apples, frying on top of the stove, filled the room, and mixed with the fresh scent of the pine needles on the floor.

"Your apples smell good," said Jarni, recalling childhood memories of winter evenings when the huge brown tile stove in Pine Hill had produced hot juicy apples, their skins shiny and tight and their insides fluffy as whipped cream.

"Want one?" The old woman hurried to the cupboard, took a plate decorated with a big red rose, and carefully selected the largest of the sizzling lot. Jarni broke it in two and blew vigorously at it.

"It's always the ladies who like my apples," the old woman continued. "The gracious Miss who lived in the room on the other side was plain crazy about them. Now she's gone."

"Where to?" asked Jarni to keep the conversation going.

"She worked in the main castle with two professors, and when they moved to that filthy Prussia she went with them. One wouldn't think she would go to a dirty place like that, such a noble learned lady."

"You have a room to rent?" Jarni did not know how to comment on the woman's classical references to the age-old antagonism between Bavaria and Prussia. "I'm looking for a place to live."

"I can show it to you," said the little old woman timidly. "But it wouldn't be good enough for you with that fine coat. We're only poor gardener folk."

The other room was an exact counterpart of the living room. There was a wide bed with a canopy, a tile stove, a wardrobe, and a big oak table worn dark by centuries of use. On a corner shelf stood a statue of the Virgin, flanked by two photographs.

"Who are they?" asked Jarni.

The old woman came close, curtsied, crossed herself, and took the photographs down.

"This is our Crown Prince Ruprecht. But the gracious lady must know him. He won the war for us. He will make a fine king. And here — " her eyes shone and she looked long and lovingly at the picture, "it's his Eminence the Cardinal." She bent and kissed the glass of the frame. "If the gracious lady decides to take the room, I'll ask Father Alois over from the chapel. He'll light the Eternal Lamp. The other young lady," her voice sank to an awed whisper, "didn't want the Eternal Light. She was a poor heathen. May God forgive her erring soul!"

"I'll take the room," said Jarni quickly, to overpower a strangling fear she had first felt in the director's office. "What does it cost?"

"You mean you really would take the room now in the middle of winter? What a stroke of luck that would be! But the heating, gracious lady, it's the heating that costs money! I gather all the kindling but the rails have to be split and brought over from the woods."

"You order coal for me and I'll pay the bill."

The little old woman rushed for her shawl. "I'll have to ask my old man how much the room is," she cried in excitement. "You wait here. It only takes a few minutes to go over to the greenhouse. There — sit down in my old man's chair. I'll be right back."

Jarni was alone in the low room. The pale rays of the November sun, shining through the bare limbs of very old trees, painted delicate designs on the pine-covered floor. The sizzling of the apples and the ticking of a baroque clock, working steadily away on time, were the only sounds. And while she sat there in a deep grandfather's chair that smelled of tobacco, the utter quiet penetrated to her shocked heart and she could cry for the first time since Werner Posener had died.

Her work in the State Theater would have been disagreeable had Jarni noticed the situation. But she did not. She was only partly aware of the open hostility of the established stars, who had been playing the same parts for twenty and thirty years and were suspicious of any newcomer. Aimlessly she roamed through

Nymphenburg Park, now buried in snow. The magnificence of baroque fountains and marble statues was enhanced by fantastic forms of frozen water and shifting sheets of fine snow. Deer, squirrels, and even the shy rabbits were tame. They came to the gardener's house for nuts and breadcrumbs, and they passed her like fleeting shadows when she groped her way home through the darkness after her work in town was done. She tried to give herself up to the calm peace of nature, but she could not rest. Something in her was afraid of losing consciousness of all that had happened. It drove her to constant moving, a tight strenuous wakefulness, and it haunted her dreams as soon as she fell into an exhausted sleep. It was no longer the fact of Werner Posener's death and the hazy knowledge of the sinister connection between her brother's childhood love for her and this murder he had planned. It was the despairing obligation to admit the defeat of her ideals, in which she had believed with the faith of a devout soul whose readiness to worship had never been diverted by metaphysical creeds. Andreas von Neel's obsolete concept of political honor, which would not admit the baseness of the new enemy, his weak submission to party tactics, had been as deadly as the vain isolationism of Berlin's creative forces. With the crumbling of her ideals she felt for the first time the exhausting strain of past years; her strength had been depleted by efforts that had no justifiable goal. Despairingly her mind tried to get a new hold on life, but from the shrine in her room, now lit by a red oil lamp, and the coldly detached statues in the park, to the odor of age-old dust and rancid grease paint filling the dressing rooms of the State Theater, there was nothing to connect this frozen past with a new social reality. It was petrified history, condemned to eternal existence long after it had died. Not even Werner Posener's face remained. It started to fade as time went on, and all her willingness to live for its memory and to keep its message alive could not save it from oblivion.

The first performance of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* was over.

When Jarni left her dressing room a man accosted her and said in a shocked voice: "Miss Dallmann, it's really you! I couldn't believe my eyes when I read your name in the newspaper announcement. I had to come and see with my own eyes that it's really you who is playing bit parts in this mausoleum."

While he spoke Jarni searched her memory in an attempt to place this face she seemed to know. And suddenly she remembered. He was the politely admiring guest to whom she had talked in Finn's studio on the first night of Holt's play — the immaculately dressed Mr. Kettler.

"Didn't you want me to come to Munich? You see, I accepted your invitation."

"Yes, but I didn't want you to appear as Armgart in an abominably bad performance of *Wilhelm Tell.*"

"It's not my fault that provincial theatres are so poor. I told you so, Mr. Kettler."

"I didn't have the State Playhouse in mind when I asked you to come. We have an excellent independent theater here. That's where you belong."

Jarni accepted an invitation to dinner, not because she was interested in the other theater, but because the evening's archaic performance had hurt a professional pride in her she had believed to be dead. As an actress she longed again for high standards and unique achievement. For the first time she felt nostalgia, and she dreaded to go back to the quiet park, the icy statues, and the low-ceilinged room with the flicker of an eternal light in which she did not believe. It was like moving from dusk to dawn in a shadow world. Mr. Kettler at least was real enough to help her forget for two hours the vacuum in which she lived.

Leopold Kettler was well bred, exquisitely educated in Heidelberg, Oxford, and the Sorbonne, and familiar with every slogan and every doctrine that had gained popularity among European intellectuals since 1919. He had great facility in formulating philosophical and artistic problems, but it never crystallized into a creative effort. His was the mind of an excellent interpreter. Jarni did not ask how original he was; she enjoyed the stimulation his conversation offered, and she became a frequent guest in the beautiful old mansion on Brienner Street. The antique furniture had been supplemented by pieces of modern design showing excellent taste; and she was captivated by this atmosphere of culture and good breeding as once before by the book collector's house after the squalor of the union bookstore and an unheated attic room.

They had known each other not more than four weeks when Leopold Kettler proposed to her while they were riding in a sleigh through the dormant forests of the foothills of the Alps.

"We are both hurt and lonely," he said in a soft melancholy voice. "I have been married twice and I have twice had the abysmal disappointment of seeking the unusual and finding mediocrity. We have both stopped believing in love. Why don't we help each other by sharing our lives."

Jarni thought of her bleak lonelines, of the rapidly fading memory of Werner Posener, and bitterly and hopelessly she thought of the fact that the theater had failed to provide her with inner fortitude in the past crisis. She was tired of suffering, and hopeless about her ability to fight alone for a creative place in society. With the frenzied grasp of a drowning person she accepted the duties and rewards of family life as recompense for the failure of her calling.

One night in Leopold's chalet high up in the Alps Jarni expressed what had been in her heart for many months.

"I want a child," she said. "Yes, I want children. It will give both of us an objective aim, help us to forget the past, and it will give you back faith in love and loyalty."

For minutes there was heavy silence.

"If you have a child, Jarni," he said finally in a voice that frightened her, "I'll divorce you. I have watched your enthusiasm for domesticity with patience because I thought it was a passing whim. But if you too become nothing but a breeding female I'm through. You are an artist, a great actress destined for fame. You can be or do anything, Jarni. There is no passion, no deviation I won't understand. You are not accountable to the law of common men. But I won't have this beautiful picture distorted by pregnancy and by all the accompanying mess and ugliness of childbearing. I had enough of that."

"You have children?"

"I have two boys from my first wife."

"Don't you love them?"

"I have hated them from the first day for what they did to my life. They changed the woman I thought I loved into a stupid fat wetnurse. Children belong to my bourgeois world of inherited names and fortunes, but they don't belong in the world of subtle exclusiveness I want to build around you."

"But I love children," said lonely Jarni. "We could make them part of our world."

"One can't and I know it. All the passion and tenderness and patience a woman has for her lover is exhausted as soon as this screaming bundle of red flesh arrives. Childbearing is an animal instinct, blind, brutal, and dull. Berlin liquidated it years ago, and so will I. It's beneath us."

When they returned to Munich, Jarni wandered aimlessly through the old house she had loved. Bitterly and stubbornly she fought against a thought that kept coming to the surface of her mind: why had she left Berlin?

Leopold would not permit her to become a part of this house. Eternally she would have to play the great unexplored miracle of a ridiculously distorted libertinism which he worshipped with the adoration of a tired provincial, and outside this house there would be nothing. She thought of the ludicrous reverence with which the chair of some lecherous old king was preserved in the State Theater, and of the naïveté with which Mother Fuenferle had proclaimed archaic Ruprecht the victor of the first World War, still hoping to see him "make a fine king." The German provinces were dead, killed by the extermination of a tradition which had not been supplanted by a new social concept. Berlin was heartless, megalomaniacal, and full of cynicism, but it was unromantic and uninhibited because it had a goal. Genius, fame, freedom, sex, were routine, allowing no dark unlighted corners to hatch repressions.

The year of 1929 resembled a sultry spring day, too hot to last. Small crashes of provincial banks caused a tremor in the inflated structure of Germany's economic system, but like a crowd of picknicking townspeople the Germans refused to heed the warning of the approaching storm. Blinded by the golden rain of an artificial boom, the workers were convinced that the quota of two million unemployed was static and would never increase; manufacturers expanded the production of luxury and export goods, convinced that foreign markets would never collapse; Socialist and Democratic politicians snored audibly in somnambulistic security; and intellectuals and artists fortified the ivory tower of their splendid isolation with more intricately stained glass windows against the raw light of reality.

It was then that the name Hitler appeared in political rallies and in the headlines of a rapidly growing newspaper, the National Observer. A mustached, bellowing Cassandra, he foretold Germany's doom if she did not return to a belligerent and racially pure nationalism. But his career as an unsuccessful marauder was still well remembered, and for a long time he played as insignificant a part in the crowded political arena as any other noisy and irritating agitator. It became fashionable among Munich society to go occasionally to National Socialist meetings as one would go to a show, listen to the trash of the main speaker which invariably culminated in a flood of profanity against the Jews, and to leave with the reassuring feeling that such vulgarity could never gain influence.

With Will, a friend of Leopold's who experimented with atonal music, and Sandra, a young actress from Munich's modern theater, Jarni sat one night in the stuffy beer cellar, expecting to be entertained by the new political buffoon Hitler. His right arm stiffly raised, he strutted down the aisle between crowded tables, a short man in high brown riding boots, riding breeches, and a brown shirt. Jarni noticed his small, white, short-fingered hands, which might well have been those of an elderly matron, clutching a horse whip which he beat rhythmically against the leather of his boots. Most of the people applauded frantically, but with a short impatient gesture he reduced them to silence as soon as he had reached the rostrum. Eight young men in black uniforms flanked the speaker, staring with martially determined faces into the crowd.

Hitler started to speak in Lower Austrian slang which leveled the difference between hard and soft consonants to a squashy drawl. But Jarni could not concentrate; there was nothing in his voice that fascinated her. She started to watch the audience of lower middle-class people, stout, short, and complacent, their faces hovering like toy balloons over their steins. And suddenly she discovered the gardener's family with whom she had shared the old house in the thicket of the Nymphenburg Park. Mother Fuenferle's small, bent figure was nearly lost in a big black shawl; her gnarled fingers knitted rapidly on a gray sock while she looked at the speaker. To her right sat her son, a stocky peasant with an expressionless ruddy face, his hands folded devoutly around his mug; beside him his young wife cuddled a baby to her breast. Jarni thought of the two photographs beside the eternal light, Prince Ruprecht, to whom Hitler had promised a return of land and crown in 1923, and the Catholic cardinal who, with the fabulous skill of the church to wait and compromise, had until now never openly denounced the growing tendency toward belligerent nationalism. Mother Fuenferle and her ideals fitted neatly into the picture. Her presence in the beer cellar was quite logical.

By then Hitler had come to the special purpose of the night's meeting. He announced that he had joined the national-conservative parties in demanding a plebiscite on the matter of the acceptance of the American Young Plan, regulating the payment of war reparations by Germany. The cheers of the middle-class audience were nearly drowned out by noisy protests from a group of young men in the rear of the hall.

"They must be Strasser's followers," said Leopold. "He's violently opposed to Hitler's association with capitalists and monarchists."

Like Tiller Girls, the eight bodyguards turned their heads simultaneously toward the Fuehrer, and their right hands clutched the holsters of their guns. Adolf Hitler gave them the fond glance of a loving father. Then, as if restraining overzealous children, he beckoned to them to be at ease.

"We are a loyal party!" he shouted in a voice which silenced boos and hisses. "We fight with the legal weapons of the Republic which we shall beat at her own game. Against the unholy alliance of Communists, Socialists, and Democrats, we set the alliance of German patriotism. I dare anyone to call that an act of treachery." He paused and looked challengingly at the spellbound crowd. "This plebiscite against slavery, sadistically drawn out over fifty-seven years, will show the English and French usurers that Germany is still willing to fight back." Again he stopped, changing his tone now to one of cocky reassurance. "Don't worry about the temporary association of the National Socialist Party with landowners and industrialists. We shall use and convert them because we are infinitely stronger than they. I, Adolf Hitler, have created the army of liberation for a new Germany, and not they. I, Adolf Hitler, gave you a new spiritual life by proclaiming new goals in our party program, and not they. And I, and not they, will give you the signal to start the final battle. In a few months, in a few weeks, yes, perhaps in a few days the die will be cast. Germany will be elevated to the first place among the peoples of the earth; and you, and you, and you —" his arm pierced the air that was thick with smoke and the smell of beer, "you'll be the masters, commanding scores of slaves to build for you the empire that is your due. It will not last for forty-eight years like Bismarck's, not for six hundred years like Charlemagne's, but it will last a thousand years!"

The crowd broke into a raging applause in which protests from the rear of the hall were only faintly audible. Adolf Hitler, a greasy lock glued to his perspiring forehead, stood motionless, acknowledging the acclamation of the Bavarian master race with a stiffly raised arm.

Jarni stared into his face, and it occured to her that it was a soft, sagging face which got a manly touch only from the black mustache. Then her eyes went over the audience and were held by Mother Fuenferle's son. He sat there like a young bull, his short neck thrust forward and his eyes bulging. His enormous fists were doubled and he pounded the table in a wild insane bombardment, yelling with earsplitting monotony: "Hail, hail, hail!"

Will, the musician, was highly amused when they sat later in a bar. A strand of hair was hanging down his forehead and a fountain pen perched precariously on his upper lip. He imitated Hitler while Sandra, the young actress, personified the audience with a variety of acclamations, hisses, and boos. Leopold watched the hilarious scene with benevolent interest.

"I can't see what's so funny about it," said Jarni uneasily. "Hitler alone isn't much of a danger, but this alliance with the conservatives he confessed tonight creates a united front of reaction strong enough to smash the split-up leftists."

"Wrong!" said Leopold. "I'm sorry, darling, but in politics you're mostly wrong. It's not Hitler who will corrupt Hugenberg, Seldte, and Company to fascism, but they who will convert Adolf into a lawabiding conservative. Junkers, generals, and millionaires will reduce the paper hanger of Braunau to a servile hand, working like them for the re-establishment of the monarchy."

"And wouldn't that be bad enough?"

"What's the difference? The masses need symbols and opiates and it seems the Catholic Church doesn't furnish enough of them.

Let them worship whom they want. They have to have some one. It's their daily bread since Adam and Eve. People need leaders as primitive and obvious as they. It won't influence our lives because we are not the people."

"But we are!" Jarni was aggressive and sharp, not so much from anger over her husband's attitude as from a shameful feeling of cowardice. She had suspected his views but had carefully avoided political arguments to preserve peace. "Do you believe you could go on with a life of philosophical speculation and esthetic pleasure if Germany falls under a new spell of active imperialism? It will wipe out you and me and all cultural and social progress made in the last twenty years. You heard them rave tonight when Hitler ended. You can't take that as if it were none of your concern."

"Gee, can she talk!" Sandra giggled. "How do you stand a chance against so much wisdom, Leo?"

"He doesn't," said Will. "Don't you see how he has shrunk since he took another fling at matrimony?"

Jarni looked pleadingly at her husband. One word of loyalty from him and she would forget what had separated them.

"Jarni has fallen lately under the spell of violent domesticity," explained Leopold, looking thoughtfully along his golden cigarette holder, his left eyebrow raised in an expression of melancholy sarcasm. "This predilection for housekeeping and babies has aroused in her a love for little people and their way of living. Never mind her now, it'll pass. Won't it, darling?"

She looked into his soft and sad eyes, in which a flash of arrogance was lurking and she did not answer, because every word she would say would reveal the gulf between their convictions to such an extent that it could no longer be ignored.

Leopold Kettler derived only a small part of his considerable income from his publishing business, which specialized in authors who had great literary merit but sold poorly. Most of his money came from a bequest left him by his maternal grandfather, who had brewed the best beer in Munich. For thirty years the largest investment bank in the country had managed his account and he had never checked their efficiency or questioned their honesty. The first rumors of a new depression and of the possible insolvency of the International Credit Corporation found him totally helpless and uninformed. Before he could take effective steps to save his fortune, the bankruptcy tide of 1929 had swallowed up his money. He had lost not only more than a million marks, but with it an income of fifty thousand a year. At the same time the State requested the Playhouse to cut expenses, and one of the first contracts to be canceled was that of Jarni, since she was not a native Bavarian.

Leopold Kettler was stunned. His world had been founded upon complete elimination of unpleasant details. His publishing house was run by two highly paid experts who left to him only the final decision about the purely literary merits of a book; and his home was run by overpaid and wasteful servants. He had never lived without a valet, and he could not understand the facility with which Jarni parted with her personal maid, and replaced the cook by a maid of all work. But the savings achieved were negligible in comparison with the loss of income and it was obvious that the house could not be maintained. The day after this decision had been reached, Leopold vanished. For twenty-four hours Jarni trembled at the ring of the telephone lest it confirm his suicide. The simple truth, however, was that he had not been able to face the auctioning of his library, his exquisite furniture, and the paintings he had collected. He had retreated to his chalet in the Alps "to find a new adjustment to reality," as he wrote hopefully to Jarni.

But he was depressed and utterly lost when he returned to the small flat she had rented in the old artist quarter of Schwabing. His publishing house was gone, swallowed up by the two clever experts who for so many years had enjoyed his unlimited confidence. He hated the simplicity of his new home, he missed his library, his collections, and the opportunity to wear evening clothes.

Jarni, in her desperate desire to salvage their marriage, tried to talk him into patience with this period of transition, but one factor was working continuously against her. Leopold was unable to live without money. In two months he had spent the sizable amount he had received for selling the interest in his publishing house, and when this money was gone he was through. The first night Jarni found him drunk in the company of Sandra and Will she offered him her earnings as a loan, but he would not accept money from a woman. He was going downhill fast, and soon his plans to write a book were forgotten. In moments of penitence and determination he tried all kinds of work, which promised large sums for modest effort. But it all ended in failure — from writing film scenarios and becoming an actor's agent, to selling "Old Masters" which turned out to be new. Nothing but money in his pocket could give back his security and poise. A hint of privation, even an imagined look of pity in a woman's face, or a ride in a crowded trolley when he was tired, were enough to drive him to drink.

With set teeth Jarni clung to her work. She played now in cheap nationalistic films that were a Bavarian specialty, glorifying life in the army, or the crude romance of the farmer's daughter and the innkeeper's son. Jarni invariably had the part of the decadent namby-pamby city dweller who intrudes upon the hearty life of the country, and is victimized by the unspoiled and jocular children of nature.

Leopold had been gone for days. Jarni was now so used to his disappearances that she no longer fell into fits of anxiety as on the day on which he had left the old house on Brienner Street. She knew he would turn up again, dead tired, hungry, and miserable, and that a week or two of soberness and high-flying plans would be followed by another collapse.

But the Leopold Kettler who returned to the flat in Schwabing was a different man. His eyes were clear without the haze of a hang-over, and for the first time in a year his suit was pressed, his shoes shined, and his shirt spotlessly clean. He kissed Jarni evasively, and started to pace the floor. She watched him while the maid went back and forth, putting supper on the table. Finally the door to the kitchen closed.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Yes, we can eat. Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, I'm not hungry." With both hands clutching the back of a chair, he stared at the floor, and it flashed through her mind what soft, feminine hands he had.

"I have a job," he said suddenly. "It will give me an income of eight thousand marks a year if I prove satisfactory."

"That's wonderful! Congratulations!" It should have sounded heartier but the unrelaxed tension in his face even after the good news had been told cautioned her.

"You know the Eher publishing company?" he asked in a strained voice, staring again at the floor.

"Of course I do. They published *Mein Kampf*. Leopold — " Jarni jumped up. "Don't tell me you have signed up with them."

"I have." He lifted his head and looked straight into her eyes. "They have offered me a chance to make a highly literary enterprise out of their firm."

"I don't believe it, and you shouldn't believe it either. Hitler is their main stockholder, and Streicher, that dirty cad with his filthy anti-Semitic sheet, is one of the executives. People at the studio talk a lot about it. They admire the stuff published there because they are too primitive to compare cultural standards. They never read anything else. But you, Leopold — " Jarni went up to him and with both her hands held on to his arm. "You know the difference. Come, tell me that it's not true, that you made it up to frighten me."

His head was bowed; his hands still grasped the chair.

"It's true, Jarni. This is no joke, and I wish you would see things as they are and not get so agitated. I don't care for politics, neither leftist nor rightist politics. They haven't even asked me at Eher's whether I'm a member of the party and they know darned well I'm not. All they want is a cultured, experienced man to bring their book publications up to a high intellectual level. There's nothing wrong in that. I shall remain what I am, and it'll give me a chance to make an honest living and to get out of the rut I've been in for nearly two years." He lifted his head, his eyes pleading, and his voice was charmingly melancholy as ever. "I wish you would understand. You'll be able to give up that awful drudgery at the Bavaria Film Company, and I can again take care of your needs as in the old days."

She was silent. Where should she start to refute his excuses and illusions? Cultural enterprise — political freedom — honest money — But as she looked at him she knew that she could not refute the fact that for the first time since he had left the house in which he had been born he was sober, determined, and optimistic; and it was not she who had brought about this change.

"Let's go away from Munich," she said, summoning all her power of persuasion. "I still have a reputation in Berlin. We can make a new start. Please, let's go to Berlin."

"I have signed a contract. I can't get out of it any more." And suddenly he raised his voice in defiance. "And I don't want to either. You are judging this whole movement on the basis of a few unpleasant details that represent the growing pains of all reforms, and the writings of a man who never had any schooling. The real impetus behind this party is recovery and readjustment. The fact that they hire a man like me proves that they want to co-operate with the intellectuals, and that they're willing to pay handsomely for it."

There it was again — the money complex of an ex-millionaire.

"If you work for Eher I'll leave you," said Jarni. "I could bear seeing you live like a bum because I hoped that some day you would find yourself again. But one can never find oneself again after one has sold out to a gang of mobsters."

Tensely they looked into each other's eyes.

"Is that your final decision?"

Jarni nodded.

"Good-bye." Leopold Kettler turned around and was gone.

*

Unlike her father, Jarni's resemblance to the ant which goes on rebuilding a hill, no matter how often it has been destroyed, was limited. By the slow process of attrition life had worn down her natural desire for stability and affection. As the train headed north and the spires of Our Lady's Church vanished from sight, Jarni knew that she had accepted the fate of her generation, being nothing but one of the nameless electrons oscillating between the heterogeneous poles of a dying and a rising epoch.

"Good morning, Miss Dallmann." She turned around. Beside her in the train corridor stood Mr. Benton, the American who had been with Curt Monkenberg the day they had met for the first time. "I coughed myself hoarse but you didn't hear me."

"I'm sorry. I guess I was a little absent-minded."

"That's the way you looked. What about some breakfast? There's a diner next door."

"I thought you had gone back to California," said Jarni when they sat down. "You suffered so teribly from our climate."

"I certainly did, but even suffering can become a habit that is hard to break. I finally got so used to this atrocious continent that I never managed to get back to God's own country."

"But you're no longer connected with the film industry, are you? You had vanished from the Frederick Street film market long before I left Berlin."

"It was a very transitory connection. During the last three years I have been with the Dawes Commission, if you have ever heard of so inartistic an institution."

"Aren't they responsible for showering Germany with eight hundred million in gold to get us back on the world market?"

"Exactly. You are remarkably well informed. But with the eight hundred millions gone I have joined the five million unemployed."

"Five million? I didn't realize there were so many."

"That's the tragedy." Mr. Benton dropped the jocular tone. "No one seems to realize it except the unemployed themselves and a handful of nosey foreigners."

"And all these American millions couldn't prevent this calamity?"

"You don't want me to give you a lecture on world economics, do you? It couldn't possibly interest a young lady who is a film star."

"I'm neither a young lady nor a film star," said Jarni, slightly angered by his old sarcasm. "I wish you would go on talking seriously. It interests me more than I can tell you."

"You are no longer an actress? Good God! what's Curt Monkenberg doing now? He was determined to make you the combined Greta Garbo and Lillian Gish of Germany."

"No, I'm no longer an actress." And as Jarni said it she knew for the first time that she would not go back to the stage or the screen, that she was through with the theater.

"And what are you doing now? Please excuse my curiosity, but I often wondered what had become of you. After all, I was a kind of god father when you were baptized with the thousand waters of the theater eight years ago."

"Nothing at the moment. I'm going back to Berlin after an unsuccessful marriage."

"I'm sorry." There was a touch of genuine sympathy in his voice that moved Jarni.

"In a way I'm grateful for this experience," she said. "It destroyed the vain illusion that so-called intellectuals are immune to fascism. My husband became a National Socialist."

"Out of conviction?"

"No, for lack of money. When his income disappeared his morale went with it."

"See those chimneys there?" Benton pointed to a complex of factories not far from the tracks. "See any smoke?"

"No."

"Neither do I. If the National Socialists make those chimneys puff again there will be millions and millions to follow them for the same motives as your husband. And it won't matter, either, whether they will be asked to produce plowshares or bombs."

"But National Socialism means Hitler. He has nothing to qualify him as a leader."

"That doesn't matter. It might even be an asset. His insipid personality has acted as a smoke screen for forces which are neither unintelligent nor without experience. The educated people of Germany are inclined to minimize the danger of National Socialism because of Hitler's lack of manners and education. But he's nothing but a symbol. The real forces behind this movement are in the army, the industrial plants, and on the big estates, and while they worm their way into the state machinery they smile wisely and gratefully at the noisy and obtrusive Mr. Hitler."

"And all the cultural achievements of the Republic are no safeguard against fascism? Think of all the experimental schools, people's universities, art and health projects sponsored by the Socialists."

"All that was achieved in Berlin and a few large cities. It never influenced the masses because it didn't reach them. The decisive political factor are the voters in the small towns and in the country and they were inexcusably forgotten in the cultural program of the Social Democrats. Hitler starts with them. His policy is political encirclement of the big cities, whose culture will die of suffocation when the rest of the country has been subdued. Believe me, it's a very clever plan."

"But what will become of us?"

Curtis Benton looked into Jarni's anxious face and he could not bring himself to tell her what he thought of Germany's future.

"I'm no prophet," he said evasively. "Let's hope that the Republic will wake up quickly and that they'll get five million men back to work before they have been lost to the enemy."

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In his younger days Director Vernette of the TAPICO (Talking Picture Corporation) had been an esthetic revolutionary, eking out a meager income by fighting for the recognition of Dadaist and Surrealist poetry, and Non-objective painting. He had risked his last cent to sponsor an invention which tried to add a sound-track to a film negative because it promised new possibilities for a combination of avant-garde film experiments and modern poetry. The unexpected success of this seemingly freakish idea had slowly strangled his idealism. By the time he hired Jarni he showed already all the characteristics of company officialdom: ambiguity, conceit, and a strong tendency to follow the increasingly reactionary "trend of the times" rather than his own convictions.

Berlin was a profound shock to Jarni. She had clung to the belief that no matter how vulnerable the rest of Germany might be to the false promises of fascism, the town that had made the superlative its life aim would remain independent. For fourteen years the provinces had lost their progressive forces to this center of freedom, and its inhabitants had shared in the creation of a new culture. With the realization that this too had been an illusion, the ground under her feet became frighteningly unstable. Her apprehension fed on a thousand small symptoms of decay and treason. A building owned by the city of Berlin had been leased to a platoon of Storm Troopers. Hitler's meetings had moved from the obscure slum auditoriums to the fashionable Sport Palace. With Bruening's support, Hindenburg, puppet of the blackest reaction, had become President of the Reich for the second time. Rows of unemployed men were waiting at the subway exits, begging for an unused transfer or a cigarette stub. They slept in alleys, on park benches, and on sidewalks, and every time the back door bell rang, it meant an unemployed man asking for food or money. From early morning till late at night an army of street musicians filled the alleys and backyards with their songs, introducing their performances with a pathetic speech about their past fortune and their present indigence. The papers were full of the growing criminality among youths. Theirs were not serious crimes, not bank-holdups, rape, or murder, but clumsy blackmail, petty theft, and the forging of relief checks — enough to push them out of society and into the ranks of Hitler's private army, which did not care about police records.

This collapsing world became such an obsession that Jarni could no longer bear it alone. She had to convince herself that the men who had created Berlin as the symbol of a great future were still at work. She did not reach Finn, the architect, or Bolung, the film director. After many inquiries she learned that they had moved to London. Writers, editors, musicians — many of those she called up did not answer. They had gone to Paris, to Prague, Vienna, or the Balearic Isles. She finally reached Holt, the playwright, and she went to meet him with high hopes of finding in him the old creative confidence.

The theater where they were to attend the opening of a new play was situated in the swank western quarter of the city. It had the reputation of being socialistic, and its reopening after a spectacular financial debacle was considered by hopeful progressives as a sign of rallying resistance against the demoralization of depression. Rumors of stupendous technical and artistic innovations had spread, but the old fraternity of first-night judges was no longer there to wait eagerly for a culmination of their hopes. The faces in the audience were unfamiliar, typically provincial middle-class, and very young men, moving in tight groups as if they were afraid of standing alone.

"Where do they come from," asked Jarni. "What do they want here? They can't be interested in this kind of a show."

"They're tourists; they don't mean a thing. The depression has hit the industrial centers harder than the agricultural districts. They come here to spend their money." Clemens Holt was totally unconcerned about the shifting visitors.

The play, written by a young poet who up till then had been known only as the author of pungent chansons, used the inflation as the dramatic background. The main figure was a little Jew from a Russian ghetto who by virtue of only one hundred American dollars buys Berlin and finances everything from the nationalistic Kapp insurrection to international arms transactions. He collects money by the millions while around him Germans starve by the millions, or drag out their lives in a poverty greater than that of a Chinese coolie. The driving power that makes the little Jew Kaftan function is a gentile lawyer, who serves as a link between the militaristic clique of Potsdam and the ghetto of Berlin. It is he who utilizes Kaftan's money for the nationalistic movement, he who seduces Kaftan's tubercular daughter, and he who finally pushes the little Jew back into obscurity when the stabilized market makes Kaftan's hundred dollars dwindle again to just a hundred dollars. But Kaftan vanishes only as an individual. His type survives and is represented in his successor Cohn, and in his successor's successor Eisenberg.

The scenery accompanying this play was an experiment of breathtaking boldness. The action took place on a three-story stage, representing the tragic proletarian level, the tragicomic middle-class level, and the comical militaristic-capitalistic level. Huge platforms moving up and down connected the different stories as soon as their representatives merged in the course of the play. Rolling, pushing, crossing conveyor belts carried new actors and new settings before the audience. The floor of the stage was cut up into parts which were raised and lowered, which receded and advanced, opening abysses on one side and piling up to become steep walls on the other. The stage rattled, creaked, buzzed, grated, clattered, and droned, while floods of light projected films, shadow plays, and statistical charts. It was an insane uproar lasting for four hours. Finally the end of the inflation inferno arrived and a group of streetcleaners swept out paper billions, militaristic implements, and the corpse of a World War soldier. It was then that the new element in the audience came to life. The school teachers, ministers, and retired officers had forgotten that they had never objected to Hamlet's and Horatio's disrespectful remarks about a human skull. This was their soldier, the symbol of the war of revenge they were hoping for, and they would not allow his propaganda value to be reduced by Bolshevist cynicism. A turmoil broke loose that could not be subdued, and hostile groups were still fighting each other amid imposing invective when they left the theater.

Jarni was leaning against a pillar in the foyer waiting for Holt to bring her coat from the check room, when her attention was caught by the back of a man helping a woman into her coat. As if he had sensed her shock he turned around, bowed stiffly, and passed on. It was her brother Jasper.

"Is Dallmann a relative of yours?" Holt asked while she stared after the disappearing couple. "I often wondered about the similarity of your names."

"What's he doing in Berlin?"

"He's city editor of the National Observer. Didn't you know?"

"I didn't," said Jarni with a parched feeling in her throat. "Let's get out of here."

"If only I knew what upset you about tonight's play, Jarni?" They were sitting in a Hungarian restaurant, successor of the back-yard "Weinstube," which had vanished with so many of its customers. "It's another experiment. That's nothing new in Berlin."

Holt had aged visibly in two years. His high-strung aggressiveness had been replaced by an air of passive resignation.

"No, this is something new, at least for me," Jarni said bitterly. "This is the moral and political suicide of a whole class."

And suddenly it was all clear to her and she could formulate it without having to search for words. "You are a Jew, aren't you?"

Holt nodded.

"And so are tonight's author, composer, and most of the main actors. Even the man who financed this performance is a Jew."

"What of it?" asked Holt uncomprehendingly.

"These members of an abused persecuted minority produce a show that will be interpreted as a caricature of their own race at a time when Jew-baiting starts to spread all over the country, and when Rathenau and Werner Posener have been murdered for being Jews. Agitators will use the story to prove that the Jew has no greater enemy than himself, and that he himself will be to blame for another diaspora. All his gentile opponents in the play are caricatures: the impotent general, his sex-crazy wife, the drunken officers, and the cheap middle-class lawyer Mueller. Don't you see, Holt? This play gives the National Socialists all they want. It will be played up as a confession of what the Jews think of themselves, and thrown into the bargain is a happy confirmation that all the ninnies and fatheads, the Hindenburgs, Mackensens, Helldorfs, served their purpose as successful red herrings to divert attention, by their pranks and blunders, from the overthrow of the Republic."

"Camouflaged war-mongering may have had some success in the provinces," said Holt. "Here in Berlin people know what's up. We are anything but gullible. And as for the Jewish question: even I with my natural pessimism think you underestimate the people. They know that Berlin was made great by Jewish collaboration. The intellectual Jew can afford to be objective, even a little cynical about himself. His contribution to art, science, and economics is too obvious."

"But there are times when a minority can't afford to be objective about themselves, not only for reasons of self-preservation, but out of loyalty to those who fought their battle. The elimination of race-prejudice and anti-Semitism under the Republic has led to a complete identification of Jewish and liberal ideas in the heads of the reactionary elements. They will take this play as justification to rid the country of Jews and liberals alike. Democracy is as indivisible as the fate of the nation."

Holt did not protest any longer. He concentrated on his food, and Jarni did not know whether he was still listening.

"And what makes this show so especially tragic," she continued more to make the matter clear in her own mind than to convince Holt, "is the discrepancy between intellectual content and technical realization. It's not the machinery which crushes and invalidates the play. It's the text which is too weak, too plainly old-fashioned in its cliché of vile Jew and stupid aristocrat to live up to this powerful stage technique. It's like building a stratosphere rocket for the purpose of dispatching an old volume of the 'True Home Companion' to Mars."

There was a long silence and Jarni felt as isolated as if she were alone. Then Holt looked up, and his eyes had a warm glow.

"It was wonderful to listen to you, Jarni. I've been 'moving your words in my heart,' as the Bible says, and I have discovered a trace of truth in what you poured out so passionately. There is a self-hatred in us Jews which is perhaps our fiercest enemy. But do you know, Jarni, that it is this trait that makes Germans and Jews akin as hostile brothers? Both share a deep inner insecurity which drives them to a nearly religious adoration of foreign culture. Nowhere on earth have French *Esprit* and *English Style* found greater appreciation than with their 'hereditary enemies,' the Germans. With the regularity of an astronomical cycle these periods of imitation are followed by the awakening of a queer kind of pride. The *Spiritus Teutonicus* runs amuck as a protest against its own submission to foreign influences, clawing and killing. And brother Jew? After periods of complete assimilation which make him the most un-Jewish member of his race, the German Jew suddenly discovers that he has become a caricature of his host, that he has absorbed all the characteristics which make German society a failure. And he too runs amuck — against himself, his soul crying out for his lost heritage and for a new diaspora, which — you may be right — imitator and example will have to share."

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The realization that Clemens Holt was a friend and ally did not help Jarni overcome her passive hopelessness. It took an attempt to visit Uncle Andreas von Neel to shock her out of this inertia. On a May afternoon in 1932 she rang the bell of the beautiful house in the Grunewald.

"I came to see Doctor von Neel."

"Doctor who?" The maid looked blank.

"Doctor von Neel; he lives here."

"Not that I know of. But if you wait I'll go and ask."

"Don't," said Jarni with a sudden premonition. "Who lives here now?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Dallmann. But really, I can go and . . ."

"No, thank you."

Slowly Jarni walked down the street. Andreas von Neel had died, and no paper, no radio program had dared to mention the passing of the great Socialist. Jasper and Vera were living in his house; its clean-cut functionalism a bitter contrast to their muddy lives. And while she thought of Uncle Andreas, of his human intelligence rendered impotent by the rise of a new barbarism, a slow and steadily deepening wrath came over her. It carried her at a fast and furious pace away from her position as an enlightened but passive spectator into an inescapable obligation to act. Without hesitation she signed her full name on a visitor's pass in the reception room of the National Observer, and it was her wrath, not fear, that made her heart beat violently when she entered her brother's office.

Jasper Dallmann wore a tight-fitting black uniform which emphasized the pallor of his face. But he was no longer thin, and the gain in weight made him look more manly and less sinister.

There was a new urbanity in his behavior, the confidence of a man who has defeated failure.

"What a rare visitor!" he said winningly. "You still are the swan that surprisingly enough came from a family of very ugly ducklings. Won't you sit down? Have a cigarette."

"Thank you, I don't smoke." The mere idea of accepting anything from his hands was repulsive.

"That's news! In the old days it was you who were so frightfully emancipated, and I was the great abstainer."

For a second they looked into each other's eyes, and then Jasper said, holding her glance unflinchingly:

"And what's the purpose of this visit? Have you finally recovered your senses?"

"What do you mean by that?" Jarni played for time to find the best possible moment for her attack.

"It can mean only one thing," said Jasper, in a mildly didactic tone. "You are ready to join our ranks."

"You're crazy. Only you could have an idea like that. Join your ranks!"

"And why not?" Jasper still spoke in the same mildly persuasive tone. "Your family has done so and so has your husband. That should convince you."

"My husband? What do you know about my husband!"

"Everything," smiled Jasper, "absolutely everything."

"He has not joined the party; that's a lie. He took that job at Eher's because he was desperate and too proud to accept help from me. But he would not join the party. It's absurd."

"It would be advisable for you to talk less loudly and furiously." Jasper took a file folder from a drawer, and opened it in his hand.

"Leopold Kettler, thirty-four years old, party member 49766 of the local unit at Munich," he read. "If you doubt the truth you can see it in print."

He threw a paper over the desk, but Jarni did not look at it. A last tie, a last hope for integrity and reason had broken.

Jasper watched her with a faint smile. "You see there are people adhering to moral and intellectual standards you yourself acknowledge who consider the party not too worthless to join. So what about you, Jarni Dallmann? It would make your life and mine a lot easier."

"I didn't come here to hear you make a propaganda speech," said Jarni. "I came to tell you that I give you three days to clear out of Berlin and Prussia. Murderers don't belong here."

Jasper did not move; only his jaws moved convulsively and he clenched his fist.

"Don't try to be funny!" he said in a low, strained voice. "We are not used to listen to imputations, no matter how foolish they are."

"It's the truth, and you know it. You murdered Werner Posener because it was you who forced that idiot Harold to carry out the crime. I would have gotten at your throat when it happened, but I had to spare Uncle Andreas. Now he is dead." She got up from her chair. "Now we can get even. You leave this city and the state of Prussia or I'll see to it that you spend the rest of your life in jail."

Jasper Dallmann had been trained too long in the art of subversion to betray any reaction.

"And on what evidence do you base your assertion?"

"You'll be surprised what an excellent witness I have." Jarni was so sure of the solid foundation of her cause that she smiled triumphantly. "It was Harold, your cousin, sweetheart, and slave Harold Dallmann who came to my house one week before the assassination of Werner Posener telling me that you had ordered him to do the dirty job but that he would let you down if you married Vera."

"That's interesting, very interesting indeed," he sneered. "And who else was present at this remarkable meeting?"

Jarni saw her evidence go up in flames.

"That's irrelevant," she said with forced calm. "The fact remains that Harold confessed and that he can't deny it."

"He can't? Really?" Jasper was now relaxed and nearly cheerful. "Just one moment."

He pushed the button of his house telephone. "Have Lieutenant Dallmann come into my room."

While they waited Jarni stared in her brother's face, moved by an unbearable urge to jump over the desk that separated them and fight it out with him tooth and nail as they had done when they were children. But with the clicking of Harold's heels behind her back the wave subsided and her mind cleared.

While Jasper's figure had merely broadened out, Harold had definitely become fat. His bulky figure was squeezed into a black uniform like Jasper's, and his red face was sagging and pouchy.

"At your command." He saluted, looking at Jasper with the attention of a trained butcher dog.

"Your cousin Jarni here has an interesting story to tell which I would like you to verify." Jasper leaned forward in his chair, his elbows resting on the desk, and his fingertips pressed together. His black eyes had hypnotic strength as he looked at Harold, and he spoke in the slow, carefully accentuated tone of an adult instructing a child. "She claims you once came to her house and told her about a plan of yours to murder a man by the name of Werner Posener. She insists that you named me as the instigator of this plot."

Jarni had turned around, watching Harold Dallmann's reaction. He did not move his eyes from Jasper's face, but they widened in unspeakable horror. His red complexion darkened to a deep purple, and his mouth, wide and shapeless, opened in shock and confusion. He was such a picture of helpless perplexity that Jarni's hope of trapping him into a confession revived. But all was lost when Jasper spoke again.

"I have told Jarni that this is completely impossible, impossible, you understand; that we would never soil our hands and our honor with a crime, and that we have nothing whatsoever to do with a case that proved to be a highway robbery which had fatal consequences. But if you think I'm wrong, please correct me. Tell all and everything you know."

By the time Jasper ended, Harold finally understood.

"I know nothing," he bellowed in a voice still unsteady with emotion. "I — go to a house of one like her?" He laughed sneeringly. "I've never been drunk enough to do a thing like that. I know what I owe to my uniform and my leader. And as for that — that murder: I don't know a thing, not a single thing, as true as I'm here."

"That will do." Jasper had again assumed his faint smile. "I'm sorry, sister, but your only witness has failed you." And then, getting up from his chair with a violently threatening gesture, he shouted: "Clear out of this building or I'll have you arrested for slander and blackmail!"

"You arrest me? What an idea! You have avoided this trap, Jasper Dallmann, but there's something else in store for you that'll break your neck. You're wearing a storm trooper's uniform. Membership in the Elite Corps requires five previous generations of purely Aryan blood. It might interest your superiors to hear that four generations ago you and your victim Werner Posener had a common maternal great-great-grandfather who was a rabbi. You are short by one little generation."

She had hardly uttered the last word when she felt a hard grip upon the nape of her neck and a big rough hand closed her mouth like an iron lid. While Harold held her Jasper stepped from behind the desk and stood closely beside her. His voice was a whisper, thin and sharp as a razor blade.

"Go ahead and tell them. You're free to do so. But I warn you. You'll find it impossible to prove your denunciation from the birth registers. You should know by now that I take no chances. And besides — I don't think it would be worth the price. There have been more robberies with fatal consequences recently. — Let her go!"

Harold removed his hands. Jarni stared into his face which again was dull and expressionless, and then she looked at Jasper who smiled triumphantly. And she knew she had lost the first round.

* * *

"Don't you think this whole scheme attaches too much importance to a little wench like Jarni." Franz Dallmann, retired commander of the Navy leaned back in his leather chair and looked ironically at his nephew. "We got Schrieffen into the TAPICO office all right, but to keep him there will not be so easy. He knows as much about film production as you and I, and he isn't interested in it either. Vernette isn't stupid. He'll find out."

"Vernette will have to quit," said Jasper Dallmann. "As soon as the transfer of stocks and patents is completed he'll get the sack."

"But will he transfer his stock? Why should he give up control over a company that nets him something like forty thousand a year?"

"Don't worry about that. I have reliable information that he has to sell. Business in the film industry has been lousy. The depression did them a lot of harm. He needs new capital to get back on his feet and he'll get it without knowing who is buying the greater part of the stock and with it the right to fire him."

"And what's your interest in the whole affair? I never knew you went in for financial transactions."

"I don't," said Jasper contemptuously. "The last thing I'd dirty my hands with is the film business, but it's part of the party's political program. If we control a company we can dictate the films made there, and if we control the sound patents we can dictate to all who have to take out license rights."

"Is the party buying the TAPICO stock? I never thought they had enough money for a deal like that."

Jasper looked around cautiously before he spoke, but the big lounge of the German Officer's Club was empty. "The I. G. Color and Dye Works through its Dutch subsidiary is putting up the cash, but it's strictly confidential."

"All right, those people buy, but they won't take orders from the party. Bosch, Duisberg, and the whole gang are staunch German Nationalists with even a sprinkling of German Folk Party. They don't want to play Hitler's game."

"Not openly, of course, but indirectly. Most of the younger men on the board are for us. They're afraid of Russia, sick of labor union dictatorship, and against disarmament. They want to sell their raw film, and at the same time they would not mind a carefully prepared war which would boost their trade in serums, medicines, and chemicals."

Franz Dallmann, without further comment on the sellout of German industry to fascism, got up from his chair and greeted a young man who had come in from the lobby.

"Glad to see you." He cordially shook hands. "Sit right down. Orderly, another brandy."

Joachim Ernst von Schrieffen had a face which was as blank as an unfilled check. He had the correct appearance of a German nobleman: a shorn skull, monocle, ruddy cheeks, and the wiry figure of a horseman, but one would forget him as soon as he passed out of sight. There was nothing to indicate any personality, except perhaps a slightly feminine touch — a faint scent of lotions and a swinging of his hips when he walked.

Jasper watched his uncle's hospitality without enthusiasm. It was easy to read from his face that he did not like the young baron.

"How was your first week in the film industry?" asked the commander. "How do you like the change of atmosphere?"

"It's quite some change," snickered the young man. "I tell you, sir, one really has no idea how some people make a living. All these directors, writers, actors, and what nots — what a bunch of nitwits! An old soldier can really get hysterical over them."

"You have some material for me?" Jasper Dallmann's voice disapproved of Schrieffen's hilarity.

"Of course, I have. Miss Dallmann — "

"I have asked you repeatedly not to mention names."

"But we are among friends, aren't we? We know what it's all about."

"That makes it especially unnecesary to be specific."

"As you please." Schrieffen took a notebook from his pocket. "Here are some overheard telephone conversations and copies of some letters I opened. By the way, your method of opening and resealing envelopes is most efficient. I'm very much obliged for the tip."

Jasper did not reply. He was reading with intense concentration.

"Have you heard any more details about this scheme of making a film independent of TAPICO?" he asked without looking up from the notebook.

"Yes. It seems that Miss — I mean, that the young lady in question started last week to make a documentary film dealing with unofficial armament production and military training in youth organizations. Her helpers are a writer named Holt, and a cameraman named Gelb. I found out where they have their films printed and for a fiver the technician let me see a copy. It's pretty juicy."

Old Franz Dallmann started to get interested in the results of a plan which at first had seemed so ridiculous to him.

"What do you mean by juicy?" he asked.

"They have a shot of that perambulator factory in Pankow where machine gun carriages are assembled. It's very short, thank God, and rather dark. One sees the hands of a man holding the parts of a carriage in his hands, showing how they belong together. It looks as if it were taken in a washroom."

"Is that all?"

"And there are a few shots of members of the Young German Order practicing hand grenade throwing somewhere along the Havel."

"Thank you." Jasper Dallmann got up from his chair. "We are expecting you here next week at the same time. If anything special turns up, you know where to reach me. Good day."

Joachim Ernst von Schrieffen got up reluctantly. He had hoped for a friendly chat, an invitation to dinner, or at least another brandy. Jasper Dallmann's icy tone offended him.

"Good-bye, commander." And without saluting Jasper he left the lounge.

He was scarcely out of sight when Franz turned angrily to his nephew.

"There was no need to behave like a gouty army general. He's a decent kid and worked fine."

"He gets paid well enough for loafing around an office. I despise this type."

"You despise yourself for spying on your sister; it's your conscience that's troubling you, not young Schrieffen. Why snub a man whose father is one of the most influential men in Bendler Street?"

"That means nothing to me." Jasper hated the inner conflict which Jarni's stubbornness had brought about and he hated his uncle for his piercing eyes. "We don't need a senile general staff. They need us to get their old trade going and to care for their good-for-nothing offspring. They're incapable of anything else but spying and sneaking."

"They need you? That's grand. Better look out, my boy. They are using you to achieve their goal of national rehabilitation. When it comes to make men fight and die for Germany, it's the army and navy tradition that gives courage and endurance. It takes the experience of many generations of soldiers to win a war. Don't forget, you and your Fuehrer are after all nothing but a political party."

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After hard work and innumerable difficulties Jarni and Holt had finished the documentary film "Did you know?" It passed the film censor, who still worked under Social Democratic jurisdiction, and was first shown at a mass meeting of the "Reichs Flag Black-Red-Gold." It was a great success. Camouflaged arms production and secret military training were news to the masses, and orders for more prints started to come in. Jarni and Holt saw in it a confirmation of their hope that fascism could be fought with courage and a definite purpose, and they decided to make more pictures with a wider range and a more specialized staff as soon as money for the prints of "Did you know?" started to come in.

As Jarni was setting up a budget, the telephone rang.

"I received your order this morning, Miss Dallmann." It was the owner of the film laboratory. "But how can I make prints of your film if the negative isn't here?"

"Where is it?"

"But, Miss Dallmann, it was taken out two days ago?"

"By whom?"

"By some one with a written order from you. Here it is — I have it right on my working table, and it is signed with your name and address."

"You have a receipt?"

"I'm sure we have. The girl at the reception desk has orders to hand out nothing without a receipt. One moment, I will let you talk to her."

"Who signed the receipt for my film?" Jarni could hardly talk. Fear was constricting her throat.

"It's very badly written, Miss Dallmann, I'll spell it out to you. K-a-r-l M-a-r-x, Karl Marx, I guess that's what it says."

"Karl Marx! But that's a hoax! What did the man look like?"

"Oh, he was handsome, Miss Dallmann, really good-looking. Tall and blonde, and with a monocle in his left eye."

Schrieffen — in a flash Jarni knew that Schrieffen had stolen the negative.

Without going into her own office she went to see Director Vernette.

"I must talk to you, Mr. Vernette, but I would like Baron von Schrieffen to be present at this conversation."

"Schrieffen? He's no longer with us. He quit his job yesterday — went to Italy, I think, or to Spain for a spell."

"Did you know he's a spy?"

"A spy? How ridiculous." Vernette actually did not seem to know.

"Why did you hire him? He knows nothing about films."

"I can't say that I approve of your inquisitiveness, Miss Dallmann, but if you must know, I hired him on the recommendation of certain — certain authorities that had been very hostile to our production."

"The Army — the Bendler Street brass hats?"

"If you insist, yes, but things like that have to be handled with the utmost discretion."

"And you don't feel ashamed?"

"Your tone, Miss Dallmann, is entirely out of place. I am ashamed of nothing. Direct methods lead nowhere. We have to co-operate with the conservative traditional element to keep militant radicals from gaining influence. As long as these — these transitory conditions last, we intellectuals must hang on to our positions to hold the lines."

"What a sacrifice!" sneered Jarni. "Baron von Schrieffen was planted in my office to spy on me and to steal a film negative my friends and I had gone through a good deal of trouble to make. You are fooling yourself if you believe Bendler Street and Kaiserhof are not pulling the same strings."

"Your personal views don't interest us." Director Vernette got up from behind his luxurious desk. "We don't like employees to divert their energies by embarking on personal enterprises, and we don't like to be identified with their convictions. Your contract with the Talking Picture Corporation will not be renewed."

The film "Did you know?" was never recovered, and Jarni and her friends had to go back to recitals, lectures, and discussion evenings to counteract a rising tide of National Socialist activities. Their difficulties mounted rapidly. In the densely populated slum areas the power of armed storm troopers was so strong that no one dared to go to republican meetings, and in outlying districts only women and children showed up, many of them intimidated to the point of complete indifference.

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A performance of educational films, showing community projects in Australia and New Zealand, had nearly been completed amid the customary stoic silence; only one more reel, a report on an orange-growing co-operative in Palestine was left. As Jarni watched the faces in the flickering light of the screen, she knew that they had only come to escape the monotony of their destroyed homes — to warm up and to forget for an hour that life no longer presented any hope. As the first pictures of Jewish settlers appeared, someone in the rear of the audience whistled, and a few children in the front rows took it up eagerly; but it was a weak demonstration, unsupported by the majority. There were close-ups of men and women, proudly showing their products, and suddenly a large lump of wet mud splattered against the screen, a second and third one following in quick succession. The canvas was so spoiled now that projection was impossible. Jarni switched on the lights in the hall and stepped in the center of the stage.

"Friends!" she said loudly enough to cause some women to sit down again. "Mud-throwing is a childish way of voicing opposition, as childish as tear gas attacks, habitual heckling, and scribbling on walls. But the power behind these silly demonstrations is not childish. A systematic plan for destruction, prepared by a secret band of outlaws, will aim at you and your children today or tomorrow. They resent a well-ordered society because they have never learned to work, or because their mixed Aryan-Jewish ancestry has given them a morbid feeling of inferiority and hatred. They want to make you suffer for their psychotic complexes; that's why they kill, and why they advocate lawlessness and destruction in their paper, the National Observer. Don't buy their publications. Remember the warped minds who wrote them. Don't listen to their false promises. We can't give you jobs in a new army, like Hitler, or promises of another Russia, like the Communists, but we can give you art, truth, and a united spirit. Remain Germans — keep away from fascism!"

With silent tight-lipped faces the pinched children and tired mothers left the hall, carrying in their hands with the evening's program leaflets of the National Socialist Party distributed in the streets.

For a long time Jarni sat in the dark dressing room behind the stage, fighting a growing realization that her battle was hopeless. It was not only an inadequate economic system, depriving the people in periodical collapses of the dignity of work and pay, that swelled Hitler's ranks. The cold smokestacks, Leopold Kettler's empty pockets, the obsolete hospital in Pine Hill were merely provocations adding momentum to a mass flight from spiritual inanity. She thought of Emerson's words about "this great, overgrown, dead Christendom of ours," which in name only pretended to advocate man's infinite worthiness. The Republic had proudly liquidated this pretense but had offered nothing to replace it, not even the weekly hour of church service, its festive rest filled with the works of great composers, architects, and painters. If fascism were to triumph, it would be by force of an enthusiasm as unquestioned in its validity by the masses as food offered to a starving body to save it from death. Social Democracy had failed because its leaders had sadly underestimated man's need for one great immaterial goal.

With a heavy heart Jarni groped her way down a flight of stairs to a narrow alley leading to the main street, but she never got there. A moist cloth, smelling of chloroform, was pressed against her face, and a painful grip clamped her hands together behind her back. She tried to resist but the ground gave way under her feet and she fell into bottomless night.

When consciousness returned she was sitting in a chair, her head resting against its back, her hands tied, and a desk lamp blazing into her eyes. She turned away to avoid the glare and recognized without surprise, rather with a numb feeling of confirmation, her brother, leaning against a desk. She felt too sick to speak but the corners of her mouth dropped. Jasper watched her with a motionless face. When she closed her eyes again to fight a wave of nausea she heard his voice:

"Don't put on an act here. We have no time to lose. Either you come to, or I'll help you wake up."

Jarni smiled with contempt.

"You still speak that awful Saxon dialect. It makes commands sound especially ridiculous."

Angrily he strode over to her and jerked her head up.

"It won't do you any good," she said, blinking at him with half-closed eyes. "You can beat me up, or kill me like Posener; it still won't do you any good."

"Your game is up. Better admit that." His voice was hasty and menacing. "But nothing will happen to you if you'll listen to reason."

"I refuse to listen with shackled hands and this insane glare in my eyes. You either make me reasonably comfortable or you might as well save your breath."

The rope around her hands was cut and the lamp turned toward the wall. She was in the same room where she had met Jasper the first time in Berlin three years ago. This was Uncle Andreas' house.

"Now will you please listen?" Jasper had returned to his position at the desk. "You have done a lot of rotten things so far, but your speech tonight after the film demonstration was the climax. I warned you when you came to my office that any mention of the Posener strain in us would mean serious trouble. But you wouldn't listen. You're too cocky and too stupid to understand that you and your pals are no longer masters in Germany. It would have been easy for me to liquidate you. No one would have missed you. But a family feeling in me which — God knows! — you have abused enough compels me to give you a last warning. The manner in which you got here tonight might have shown you that we have means of shadowing you and, what's more, putting you out of our way. Draw your own conclusions. Any further attempt to discredit me or the party privately or in public will be fatal to you. If you want my advice, leave Germany. You have American connections, haven't you?"

He knew that too, Jarni realized, with a kind of unwilling admiration for so much efficiency.

"You'll be welcome in their gangster republic. But if you should insist on remaining where you're no longer wanted you must break with your old gang and keep your mouth shut."

"And what if I refuse to be bluffed?"

"Then I'll have to drop you. The next time I'll turn you over to the party police."

"Party police? What a title for a bunch of outlaws! There was a time in your life, Jasper, when you went through great hardships to become a hero. But what did you achieve? You kill my friends, you hire a monocled fairy to steal my film negative, and you drug and kidnap your own sister. What a heroic life!"

She watched her brother's face closely. She still could read it like a lesson learned in early childhood. All she wanted him to do was to admit.

"You left me no choice." His voice was bitter, without its inflated self-confidence. "It was hard enough to bear your stupid ignorance of our aims, your childish attempts to delay our fight for a new Reich. But I'll never forgive you for forcing me into killing, stealing, and spying."

His mouth trembled and his jaws worked violently.

"That's all I wanted to hear," Jarni said coldly. "Thanks for the confirmation."

Her tart note of triumph cooled his wrath.

"So what about it? What good does it do you if you know how I got you down finally?"

"This is still a country with a constitution that protects its citizens." Jarni got up from her chair. "We still have police and a law to convict professed criminals. Punishment for murder, theft, and kidnapping will wipe you and not me off the face of the earth."

With tense muscles she took a step toward the door, expecting to be restrained by force, but no one held her back.

"Good luck, sister!" With cynical politeness Jasper opened the door for her. "Let's hope German law won't disappoint you."

During their conversation Jarni had forgotten about the sick feeling in her stomach and the reeling sensation in her head. But the confidence in her brother's voice hit her like a new blow and she had to touch the wall with her fingertips to go straight along the corridor and down the stairs. On the last step she paused. Her eyes were fixed on the entrance door and she tried to rally enough strength to reach it by imagining the relief that fresh air would bring to her. And then she heard voices.

"Look at her!" said Vera. "Look at the great revolutionary! Isn't she a sight!"

"She sure is." That was Harold. "Looks like a sea-sick corpse to me."

Jarni turned. Vera and Harold Dallmann were standing in the door to the library, broad grins of satisfaction on their faces.

"Hello, honey!" Vera now spoke in a childish drawl. "Has the big bad brother given our little darling a nice juicy wallop?"

"I'll get them — I'll get them!" Jarni's heart pounded in a mad frenzy. "I'll get them — now I'll get them!"

With a flying leap she cleared the space between the stairs and the library, and with a feeling of magnificent relief she caught Vera's hair and pulled her to the floor. Holding her down with one knee her hands smashed at her like steam hammers.

"Help!" screamed Vera, "Harold, help!"

Jarni was dimly aware of a violent tug at her shoulders but the lust to strike was so strong that it resisted all efforts. It took a hard crack on the jaw to send her down beside the screaming Vera. After seconds of whirling black and red flashes she was on her knees again and flung herself at Harold who had bent over her. She buried her finger nails in his face, and the last she knew before the final blow hit her head was the satisfaction of feeling his skin tear.

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Lifted up and propped against a tree, she sat on soft ground, covered with pine needles, in the woods. The first dim light of dawn came through lank pines and fell upon a policeman pouring liquid from a canteen on a not altogether clean handkerchief. Without noticing her open eyes he wiped Jarni's face and lips thoroughly. The strong brandy, making her lacerations and bruises sting, restored her to consciousness.

"Grand stuff that!" The policeman smiled at her with the pride of a magician. "There's nothing like it to warm up a battered engine." Jarni stared at him, numbed by cold and her aching head.

"Upsy daisy, sister!" said the officer, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Up we go!" He lifted her up by the arms. "You must have been in a first-class brawl last night. My! my! a pretty young woman like you, and getting herself so full she's headed straight for a free lodging for the night."

Jarni stood in front of him, trying to steady herself.

"Look here, officer," she said without being offended by his mistaken diagnosis. "If you hadn't treated me to that brandy you could have noticed by my breath that I'm as sober as the Pope on Good Friday." She bent forward and breathed vigorously into his face. "See?"

The officer, a stout middle-aged man with gay intelligent eyes, stepped back hastily.

"All right, all right, don't blow me over! I'm just a little shrimp. But may I take the liberty of asking why the gentleman in question beat you up so efficiently? Your face looks like a sunset over the Wannsea, all red and blue and yellow."

Jarni wanted only to rest. If she admitted a love quarrel she would be free to go home. But stubborn insistence upon her rights drove her on.

"Sorry I can't oblige you with a love story. I was kidnapped and released by a bunch of Nazis." She looked straight and persuasively into his eyes. "I had a fight with them; one of them cracked me on the head. But that's not important now. The only thing that matters is that I see the commissioner of the political police at headquarters. He's the only one to whom I'll tell the whole story."

The policeman looked perplexed. Something in her voice had convinced him that she was not a mistreated streetwalker.

"All right, lady. You must know what you're asking for. Political police — holy smoke! But I can't take you to the Alexander Place in my Rolls Royce. I'll have to take you to the local station. Orders, you know."

Jarni took a few steps.

"I feel rather sick," she said apologetically. "First the chloroform and then that knockout."

"Take your time," said the officer, "just take your time." And as if he knew her whole story he added: "One of these days we'll catch them goddamn dogs!"

Jarni arrived in a cab at the huge red brick building housing Berlin's police headquarters. The four policemen at the Grunewald station had paid for it in order to spare her a ride in the official police car. She produced her pass and went up a flight of stairs, down an endless corridor, and into a waiting room provided with a wooden bench. A pipe under the seat radiated dry, dusty heat. Jarni fought her exhaustion, but despite her efforts her head slid from the back of the bench to the seat. She fell asleep.

It was her name, called out by an angry clerk from a half-open glass door, that woke her. She followed him into the adjoining room and seated herself in an uncomfortable chair. The clerk then withdrew to a table with a typewriter, leaving her face to face with the head of the political police. The man's hair, thinning and mottled with grey, was parted in the middle and glued to his skull by a greasy liquid. His eyes were blue and viciously cold; a monocle, pressed into the right one, distorted his face into a perpetually sneering grin. With a quick glance Jarni took in all these details and with the instinct of a woman she knew that her case was lost.

"You are the victim of a mysterious assault with political motives?" He frowned in disgust as he noted her dishevelled appearance. "Let me warn you before I start questioning you. We are exceedingly busy here, and neither permitted nor inclined to waste our time on mystifications or hysterical lies. Either tell your story straight with exact names and dates, or else you'd better leave."

"Jasper Dallmann, city editor of the National Observer is my brother," she started laboriously, looking stiffly at the exact parting of the commissioner's hair. "We have always disagreed politically."

The typewriter made an even, clicking noise like an echo of her voice; it stopped when she stopped talking.

"You're a Communist, Miss Dallmann?"

"No, I'm not. I have been a supporter of the independent wing of the Social Democrats."

"A great difference, indeed! Continue."

"Two years after the assassination of Werner Posener, editor of the Berlin News, I heard that my brother had become city editor of the National Observer. Knowing about his connection with this plot — "

"One moment. Are you referring to the murder committed in a Jewish cemetery in Lower Silesia?"

"Yes."

"The evidence in this case has shown that no political motives were involved. I warn you once more to stick to plain facts and to avoid any slanderous assumptions."

"I returned from Munich seven months ago, and produced together with several friends a film revealing illegal arms production and the military training of high school students. The idea was — "

"Please spare me political lectures." The commissioner raised a slender, excellently manicured hand. "We are fully informed about this — this rather ambitious enterprise."

Jarni ignored his devastating judgment.

"The negative of this film, which had been produced at great sacrifice, was stolen by a Nazi spy, called von Schrieffen, who obviously was planted in my office on orders from the National Observer. Last night after a meeting in Wusterheide I was chloroformed, kidnapped, and dragged into my brother's house. We had a heated argument about his part in Posener's death and the disappearance of my film negative — "

"You have definite evidence that this film was stolen with the connivance of the party?" The commissioner interrupted again.

"Of course not, but it seems absolutely clear — "

"And you have definite evidence that your brother murdered Mr. Posener?"

The Commissioner's voice had risen to a sharp falsetto.

"Not that he himself murdered Mr. Posener, but — "

"I warned you twice and now it's enough." The commissioner rose from his chair, resting his weight on the knuckles of his hands. "You are taking up my time with completely unwarranted accusations. The Posener case has proved nothing. There are many, I assure you, many respectable citizens in this town who despised his editorials without being members of any political party. We are far from hinting that any one should have taken the law into his own hands, but we denounce slanderous accusations against any particular man."

Without having been called the clerk appeared as if by cue and opened the glass door.

"If you want to bring action against your brother for physical assault you may do so in criminal court. The political police is no place for family quarrels."

Jarni stood in the lobby of police headquarters realizing that she had no money to go home. Her purse had been lost in the long fight. A blind veteran was selling papers in a corner of the lobby. Musingly Jarni stared into his face calculating her chances for success.

"I'm in a desperate fix," she finally said. "I have to call up a friend to come for me. Can you give me a nickel?"

Maybe it was the fear that the beggar outside the dark wall of blindness might turn into a thief, or perhaps the despair in this voice did penetrate his sensitive ears, at any rate the blind newsdealer took a coin from a drawer and threw it on the counter.

Half an hour later Arina Colmer's luxurious car called for Jarni.

That night Arina sat beside Jarni, stroking her hands gently as she had done the night on the roof garden. There were concern and deep disappointment in her voice.

"I have never seen a person ruin her life so thoroughly and senselessly as you, Jarni. The way you do it is so outrageously effective that one is tempted to think it's just another form of suicide."

Since her conversation with the political commissioner, many battles had been fought and many decisions reached in Jarni's mind.

"If only you would believe me, Arina, that I have not the slightest intention of throwing my life away. But survival alone is not enough. It's faith, the belief in a common denominator of mankind's hope, which is the one decisive difference between man and animal. I don't believe in church dogmas, no matter how liberally presented, but I do believe in a progressive trend toward social consciousness, in an inescapable obligation resulting from man's partnership with man. I am no one, nothing but a shifting particle between hostile poles. But we are not altogether without a task. The best we can salvage from our lack of illusion and belief is a passion for truth, and for the freedom to defend this truth. That may sound silly, but it is a very old goal and the lives of many generations have been offered up in attempts to realize it."

"I don't quite understand what you actually want to do, but I have a vague notion that it is not exactly in keeping with the trend of the times."

Jarni turned her head away sickeningly reminded of Leopold and Director Vernette.

"Don't misunderstand me, little Jarni. I know this man Hitler is no good; everyone who amounts to anything on the stage knows it. But that's no reason for wrecking one's life in the attempt to defeat him. We are artists, not politicians. Let them do their dirty business, art is art whether Hitler, Papen, Schleicher, or Hindenburg run the show. They can't reach us. We stand on too high a pedestal." She gave Jarni a scrutinizing look. "You're still young and you're in excellent trim in spite of your crazy life. You can try a come-back. I am willing to lend you a hand, and so would Curt Monkenberg. He has never been the same since you let him down so terribly. He was so sentimental that he didn't even sue you, and that means something, I tell you."

"And what would the National Observer say if I suddenly returned to the limelight?"

"You would have to make up with them. Tell them you're sorry, you didn't mean to threaten your brother, you were drunk, or had taken dope, or whatever you can think of. It doesn't matter. Critics are idiots, but one has to play up to them as long as audiences read newspapers."

Jarni smiled. "You are a great actress, Arina, and I wish with all my heart that you never wake up to find that your level of perfection has been invaded by politics. For you it might be all right to remain, no matter who runs the country. But with me it's different. You know why?"

Arina shook her beautiful head.

"Because I'm no actress. A genuinely stage-struck person sees nothing but himself. He has absolute faith in the perfection of his own acting. The moment he starts to doubt that it is his interpretation which makes a play important, he's out. He can't afford to be objective. If he decides that only meaningful productions are worth his effort, he'll lose his popularity, and eventually he'll starve. The genuine actor is non-political, non-social, and non-contemporary. All he needs for his fulfillment is an opportunity to exhibit his specific abilities, and it is quite irrelevant which society and government offer him this chance. That's why I can never be an actress again."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I?" Jarni's mouth felt dry as she pronounced her own verdict. "I'll have to find myself another country."

"Go away from Germany? But think what you're leaving behind?"

"I'm not leaving behind anything wonderful, Arina. What I'm leaving is a civil war in its bloody beginnings. To win this kind of a battle one has to fight on the enemy's level. Violence has to be countered by violence, sabotage by sabotage, lie by lie, with nothing but faith in the ethical supremacy of the final goal to sustain one's courage. And that I know I can't do. I used all the weapons I had, but I have been defeated because I saw too late that it is not enough to be responsible for one's own life, that all this glorious individualism can become a crime of ignorance. I can no longer live in the open save on the basis of foul compromise with my enemies. Life in a concentration camp isn't a constructive contribution either, if you're unimportant enough to die an anonymous death; and I am not fitted for underground fighting with destruction as my moral obligation. I hate violence!"

Arina looked at her with great pity. "I don't think you realize that it's a hard thing to start life in another country if you can't take anything with you."

"There is plenty for me to take." Jarni had left Arina. She leaned against the big window, overlooking the city she had loved so ardently. "There is all I have read, and acted, and lived as part of this social body and its past. There are the many wounds and failures and fulfillments, and all they taught me. I'll carry in my mind the tragedy of this country, its misguided group-consciousness, its leaderless panting for efficiency, and its blind self-sacrifice. And perhaps this knowledge of squandered riches and debased values will preserve my faith when all other evidence of my people's human qualities has vanished in the blood and smoke of a new war." She turned around. "It took France a hundred years, three monarchies, and three bloody revolutions to become a republic. England is still on the way, and America has made a strange detour into capitalistic oligarchy. Western civilizations are slow to mature. There's a flicker of hope in me that we who are outlaws now, by our mere existence, by the uncompromising determination with which we seek our goal anywhere and under all circumstances, shall prove that even this darkness will some day produce a dawn. The battle between Jasper and me has not yet been decided."

in Freya Dallmann and her grandfather Justus, and a powerful labor movement and its leader Andreas von Neel to be hoodwinked by the real victors of the first World War — the militarists without uniform.

Early socialists, Wilhelm the Second and his crumbling army, freebooters and political agitators, Hitler in his early Munich days, the brilliant but decadent men and women who gave Berlin a spurious glamor during the roaring twenties, pass the reader in a breathtaking pageant.

S. D. Peech who is married to Moholy-Nagy, the painter, now lives in Chicago. Before coming to this country she was a scenario writer and journalist in Germany and England. In this novel she shows a brilliance and force which will assure her a place among the significant writers of our time.

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